



# the teaching of Philosophy

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# THE PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES

of

THE CONFERENCE ON THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY

WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

October 14 - 15, 1949

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Edited by

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Associate Professor, Western Reserve University

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Cleveland, Ohio

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The most striking observation I heard repeatedly made at the Cleveland Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy--one reflected more than once in these proceedings--was that many academic philosophers today are beset by feelings of apprehension concerning their subject and their profession. Philosophy, often elusive, appears now, some fear, completely to have dissipated itself throughout the college disciplines--a process begun after the Civil War, when college departments proliferated, taking their content out of "philosophy," natural or moral; in fact, to some, philosophy appears upon analysis not to have any legitimate subject-matter of its own except its own history--which then would seem to be the history of nothing. A further question--a surprising one but nonetheless seriously asked--was whether philosophy, granted that it has some substance at least as an activity, has relevance to the crises of our time.

There is ample evidence in the following proceedings, I think, to demonstrate that philosophy, whatever it be for its numerous enthusiasts, is a vigorous member of the academic disciplines and, for whatever complexity of reasons, is clearly experiencing a revival. Whether philosophy be taken as the analytic method of examining all evidence out of which conclusions arise, attempting therein at all costs to keep the avenues of inquiry open, as the synthesizer of conclusions of the various disciplines and interpreter of their implications, or as the translator of old values in terms of new knowledge, it is again being asserted that philosophy alone functions legitimately as the heart of a liberal education. Practical questions concerning the place of philosophy in the college curriculum and problems arising in the actual teaching of philosophy have therefore come to demand increasing attention from philosophers.

This interest was evident at a meeting of the Philosophy Section of the Ohio College Association at Columbus in 1948, where Professor Robert G. Remsburg of Wittenberg College suggested to me that a conference on the teaching of philosophy be organized. His suggestion led to correspondence with officers of the Western Division, American Philosophical Association, which resulted in the announcement of a preliminary meeting on the teaching of philosophy subsequently held at the annual conference of the Division at Columbus in April 1949. The hundred or so attending this meeting voiced their approval of a two-day conference to be held the forthcoming October fourteenth and fifteenth at Western Reserve University under the direction of its Department of Philosophy.

The program of this conference as it was finally presented was developed upon the basis of a questionnaire sent to members of the APA and upon a voluminous correspondence resulting therefrom. An ad hoc committee composed of those whose papers appear in these proceedings aided generously in the arranging of the final details. This long-range, careful planning developed a program specifically articulated to the needs of those who did in fact attend the conference and accounts in large part for the success it attained.

The four sessions (on introductory courses, on ethics, on logic and scientific method, and on the history of philosophy) each consisted of two parts: the first was a "presentation of the problem" through the medium of formally presented papers, and the second was two discussion groups determined by placing in Group I all those from colleges with less than four thousand students enrolled and in Group II all those from colleges with more. It was discovered after registration that this divided the participants into approximately equal groups. Maximum participation is basic to the success of a conference of this type. The meetings should be each participant's meetings in a personal way; and this appears to be possible if several small discussion groups, each with pre-assigned leaders, are provided for. The device worked sufficiently well at the Cleveland conference both in getting maximum participation and in communicating information that many suggested its possible incorporation into the regular Division meetings. Reports of the discussions of the respective groups are printed in these Proceedings after the papers for each section.

The purpose of the conference was conceived frankly and simply to be the improvement of the teaching of philosophy particularly upon the undergraduate level and to provide participants with plans and ideas for experimentation which might lead eventually to such improvement. Younger members of the profession, many of whom had lost valuable teaching experience during the war years, declared they could profit in such a conference from the



experience of their older colleagues. Numerous correspondents suggested, as one put it, that members of the profession are necessarily pedagogues first and philosophers second. The regular Association meetings being largely concerned with the presentation and discussion of philosophical issues as such left unfulfilled a need, it was felt, for meetings especially devoted to problems in the actual teaching of philosophy. The approximately two hundred participants of the conference itself expressed satisfaction with its success in meeting this need.

Numerous suggestions that the Conference be placed upon a permanent basis crystallized at the final session with the formation of a Continuing Committee<sup>1</sup> given the task of investigating the feasibility of such an organization and its possible affiliation with the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association. The committee arranged a meeting held at Minneapolis, May 5, during the 1950 meeting of the Western Division. The Western Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy was organized with the following officers for the year 1950-51: President, Paul Henle, University of Michigan; Member of the Executive Committee, A. E. Avey, Ohio State University; Secretary-Treasurer, Frederick P. Harris, Western Reserve University.

Meanwhile, the Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy at its Christmas meeting<sup>2</sup> voted to join a proposed National Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy composed of a Pacific, Western, and Eastern Division with separate administrative officers but with an overall committee elected from these to form a national administrative committee. This national conference, as visualized at present, would be a loose-knit organization, largely a medium for exchange of information; but it might well sponsor, a few years apart, meetings upon a national scale.

The long-continued expressions of interest of widely scattered members of the profession indicate that there is a place for an organization of the type contemplated. It is clear that members of the profession prefer that the regular Division meetings should continue to discuss technical problems of philosophy as such, but it is equally clear that these meetings require supplementation. One of the fundamental bases upon which the Cleveland conference was organized was the belief that there are many practical problems of philosophy department administration and of class organization and materials' development that are proper matters for conference discussion. The Cleveland conference tried very hard to ask specific questions about teaching problems and to arrive at concrete answers. Since these problems are of a different specialized nature from those of the regular meetings, and so not relevant to their enterprise, what better than that they be the concern of an organization separate from but affiliated with these regular meetings? Nor does this imply subscription to the dubious theses of "methods" enthusiasts. There is no magic in method as such. Perhaps the arrangement of meetings of the Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy with the Pacific Division (one or two sessions in about four days of meetings) indicates the proper ratio of method to content. The concern is here, by common consent, with the legitimate problems of teaching practice as a subject matter for inquiry by a conference pledged to the encouragement of distinguished scholarship and inspiring teaching by the academic philosophers. Ideally, of course, the conference on teaching should itself demonstrate good teaching. As attempted at the Cleveland conference, there should be, for instance, education in group techniques by actual participation of all present in numerous small conference groups. Participation in meetings of this type can enable one to discover and to evaluate diverse means and objectives in the teaching of philosophy, make occasion for the pooling of knowledge of teaching techniques, and give one opportunity for coming to know and to appreciate each of his professional colleagues on his real ground: his actual practice of his profession. Perhaps some such organization may enhance the prestige of the academic philosopher and improve his public relations by helping to persuade the public that liberal education, philosophical education, is after all an important concern of our time.

Cleveland, Ohio  
May 16, 1950

Frederick P. Harris  
Western Reserve University

1. The members of the Continuing Committee were Albert E. Avey, Ohio State University; A. C. Benjamin, University of Missouri; F. P. Harris, Cleveland College, Chairman; J. H. Melzer, University of Kentucky; Willis Moore, University of Tennessee.
2. Mills College, California, December 27, 1949.



### A NOTE ON THE EDITING

The papers constituting these proceedings have been printed substantially as submitted by the authors with minor corrections only being made and some minor deletions in order to conserve space. The process is planography, a type of photolithographic printing, with I. B. M. modern face nine point type on sixty pound white offset.

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Mr. Verne Nazarek, the Composing Editor, is a Senior in English at Cleveland College and Editor of Scene, the Cleveland College annual.

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F. P. H.



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## PHILOSOPHY TEACHING - PAST AND PRESENT

Brand Blanshard

Yale University

What qualities go to the making of an effective philosophy teacher? Those, of course, that enable him to do successfully his own appointed work. But what exactly is this work? It will help to clear our thoughts on this matter - and to chasten our pride if we have any - to listen for a moment to the skeptics who say we have no function at all.

These skeptics have their case. They say to us who are teaching philosophy, What purpose, after all, do you serve? You are not needed as disciplinarians, for you are not teaching in a secondary school, but in a college or university, where your students are more mature. You ought not to be needed to drum up interest, since the students have normally elected the subject and may be presumed to have interest in it already. What they need is not discipline or exhortation, but, first, a clear statement of the issues of philosophy, second, a faithful exposition of the great systems, and third, a sound model for their own practice in analysis and argument.

Now, continues the skeptic, is there any one of these things that is not provided by books in a far more perfect form than by your talk? Suppose you are dealing with some such major issue as the mind-body problem, and you want to make plain to the students what the issue is, and what solutions have been suggested. Is there anything you are likely to say about it which, in orderliness and completeness, will improve on what they can get in less time from Broad in The Mind and Its Place in Nature? Or again, you have to teach Aristotle. Clearly, if the student wants to know about Aristotle's Metaphysics, the thing for him to do is to go and read the Metaphysics; there is no substitute for that. Yes, you may say, but to read Aristotle is one thing and to understand him is another; the teacher is necessary to provide comment and explanation. Can you flatter yourself, however, that any commentary or exegesis you can offer will compare with what the student will find on his shelf in Zeller or Gomperz or Ross? Or again, you want to supply an example, as memorable as may be, of precise and thorough criticism. What is the likelihood of your bettering such examples, already available, as Mill's Hamilton or Lovejoy's Revolt?

In the light of such questions, our indispensability is less plain than we could wish; and since, whether profitable servants or not, we are rather expensive ones, we should perhaps accept the burden of proof. Nor is this burden one that can be toyed with. It is easy to say that while the student can get from books what other people think, he cannot get the unique and original thought of his own professor. True enough, if the professor has not yet committed himself in print. But even then, one has known cases where the uniqueness and originality of this thought, compared with what was obtainable in print, admitted of some question. It may be said, again, that even if a teacher has nothing unique or original to say, he is at any rate alive while a book is dead, and that there is a vast difference between a sequence of ideas in cold print and the sequence presented by a living voice, with all the feeling, gesture, and attention-enlisting devices which belong to the expert teacher. Here too there is truth, and we shall have to return to it later; but on its face, it applies to the weak students rather than the strong. It assumes that ideas as they appear in books have so feeble an appeal to the students' interest that we must install a man behind the page, a sort of human magnet, to attract and hold their wandering wits.

To be sure, this has often been done with marked success. But if the teacher sets out with the assumption that ideas have so little interest, he will be tempted to depend, not on those ideas themselves, but on something extraneous, and then vulgarity is not far off. I once knew a teacher of philosophy who, when the attention of his students wandered, would drop a huge book on the floor with a bang that brought them back with a start, or when he saw a lad on the back seat furtively engaged with a newspaper, would stalk down the aisle of



his lecture-room, bend over the quaking culprit, and ask loudly what he had found that could challenge in interest the discourse from the platform. Nobody knew what was coming next. The students loved it, and this teacher's classrooms were crowded. The young have a gay partiality for vaudeville and melodrama. But it is not quite clear that students who need such props to their interest in philosophy are wholly ready as yet for its special ardors and endurance. The one excitement always appropriate to the philosophy classroom is the excitement of ideas. A preacher rightly makes appeals to our will. An interpreter of poetry, if he is to do his work, must manage to arouse our feeling and imagination. Now there is no doubt that aspiration and feeling and imagination are involved in philosophy, nor that many influential teachers of it - T. H. Green, Mark Hopkins and Charles Garman, for example -- made extensive use of them. But they are not primary in philosophy. Philosophy is an activity of reason, an attempt at impersonal, detached, self-critical reflection. For such reflection any excitement but its own commonly tends to be paralyzing. Does not any interested mind perform its reflection better when, with a book open before it, it can move at its own pace, pause for consideration if need be, turn back at will to pick up the thread, and re-read when attention wanders, than when in the midst of a crowd it must try to follow the discourse, often indistinct and not seldom meandering, of some academic lecturer?

I must confess that for myself I can only answer this question with a yes. In that answer I am fortified by finding that the teacher whom of all philosophy teachers I most admire, Henry Sidgwick, took the same view. He published in May of 1890 what he called "A Lecture Against Lecturing," which another great teacher, William James, joyfully seized upon and read in large part to his first psychology class the following fall. Sidgwick says his conviction came to him as he sat in a lecture-room in Germany. The eminent professor came in, took out his well-worn manuscript, and began to read. "I glanced round the room," Sidgwick writes; "every pupil that I could see was bending over his notebook, writing as hard as he could. The unfamiliar surroundings and the unfamiliar language stimulated my imagination, and I fancied myself back in a world more than four centuries old, in which it had not yet occurred to Coster or Gutenberg that it would be a convenience to use movable types for the multiplication of copies." Sidgwick admits that lectures are useful aids to those who lack interest or skill in reading, but holds that even for these the advantage is not always clear. "For instance," he writes, "having heard J. S. Mill speak, I rather doubt whether, if he had delivered his *Liberty* in oral discourses from a professorial chair, their effect would have been as stimulating as the perusal of the book actually was." And the ear is far more inaccurate than the eye. Choosing his example with gentle malice, Sidgwick tells of an Oxford idealist who, in descanting upon the transcendental ego, kept talking about 'the universal I.' An unfortunate student wrote it down as 'eye' and was caught out only when disaster overtook him on the examination.

What follows from all this? Happily not that the teacher of philosophy is without a function, but something important nevertheless. It is that one not uncommon way of conceiving his function is out of date. His office is not that of an expensive and leaky funnel through which there is poured into students' minds ideas that they could absorb far more swiftly, fully, and accurately from the printed page. In short, his business is not to lecture on philosophy. Ancient Athens and mediaeval Paris were compelled by physical circumstances to rely on such teaching. Some of it may be necessary now in institutions where the enrollment has overwhelmed the staff. For that reason, and in recent years, I have been doing some of it myself, and must admit that I have enjoyed it; if one loves philosophy, it is not unnatural to enjoy making speeches about it. But I hasten to add that it was always second or third rate teaching. Though I count among my colleagues some of the best lecturers I know, I should be happy to see formal lecturing disappear from the Yale department if we had the staff to make it possible. When we found ourselves faced, as we did during the influx after the war, with classes of six or seven hundred, we discovered that the easiest course was to put the finger upon one of our senior members, supply him with a portable microphone, push him gently out on the platform, and tell him to do his best for his Absolute, for his country and for Yale. Sometimes as we mopped our brows after one of these performances, we felt a wan satisfaction in having quelled the restlessness of youth for a whole unbroken hour. But it was a meretricious satisfaction, and we are trying to leave it all behind. We are adopting the small-class method wherever we can extract from a sympathetic administration enough instructors to make this possible.

If the function of the philosophy teacher is not that of the vocal substitute for a book, what is it? The best analogue I can think of is that of the coach in athletics. The man who is



teaching a hurdler how to run or a baseball player how to bat does not do it by homilies at stated times, but by watching a lad perform in the way that is natural to him, and then helping him to prune off this bad habit after that, while encouraging him continuously at points where his natural form is good. The reason why this sort of teaching is imperative in philosophy is that philosophy, like hurdling or batting, is not really a subject at all, but a special kind of activity. Philosophy exists in philosophizing, and only there. Its recorded history, for example, is not philosophy. This becomes philosophy only as, in reading Spinoza or Locke or Bradley, we too under their guidance are engaged in thinking their problems through.

It may be said that philosophy is not peculiar in this, that every university subject is an active exercise of mind. But this is not true of other subjects in quite the same sense as of philosophy. University studies differ greatly in the kind and intensity of the effort they exact. Learning to read French or Spanish is perhaps more an acquiring of new habits than an exercise of thought, and I am not sure that a process of this kind, as distinct from the study of literature, belongs at the university level. The study of history, if that means original research, may call for unlimited intellectual resourcefulness, but if it means an intelligent reading of a good historical writer like Gibbon or Trevelyan or Becker, it hardly makes a severer exaction than a similar reading of the *New York Times*. The natural sciences do impose a greater effort by reason of their abstractness. But here again, particularly in the biological sciences, thought that is highly competent may remain so close to the concrete as to be merely extended common sense; Darwin, for example, can be followed by any intelligent layman. When we turn to mathematics, we have a new order of difficulty; abstractness is here at its height, and passive absorption is out of the question. Still, the activity of the mathematician differs greatly from that of the philosopher in this respect, that the argument is all on one side; his demonstration is either necessary or null and void, while in every important issue of philosophy masses of conflicting evidence, with varying degrees of relevance, must be balanced against each other. Hence, though my own prejudices in philosophy are on the rationalistic side, I look with some misgiving on the present invasion of philosophy by mathematics and mathematical logic. In these disciplines the qualitative or intensional meaning of terms is deliberately left out, and a man may achieve high proficiency in them while lacking almost totally that soundness of judgment, that 'massive common sense,' which, if A. E. Taylor is right, is an essential to the best philosophical work. What makes philosophy so taxing an enterprise is that, like mathematics, it is an unusually stubborn effort to think clearly, while unlike mathematics, it must manage to remain sensitive to the subtlest nuances of meaning in concepts that are drenched in experience -- the right and the good, the self and beauty and freedom.

Now an activity of this kind, as Plato said, is really a dialogue with oneself. It consists of an endless darting of half-formed thoughts which on inspection may turn out, like the thought of Henry James for H. G. Wells, "as edentate as a pseudopodium"; it consists first of the sprouting of hypotheses and then the criticism of them. And the reason why teachers of philosophy are needed is that most students have neither the fecundity to produce the hypotheses nor the detachment to criticise them. If they are to do either, their dialogue with self must be prompted by dialogue with another. The student must be jarred into thinking by the teacher's challenge to his complacency; and after that he must be led to revise and refine his thought by being shown where his first suggestions lead. As for the first point: some teachers have great gifts in presenting issues so as to force their hearers' minds into motion. One of Charles Garman's students in philosophy recalled after many years the words in which Garman opened for his class the discussion of vicarious punishment. "In a shire town in England," he remarked, "a man was sentenced for stealing sheep, and the judge said, 'I convict you not for stealing sheep, but that sheep may not be stolen in the future.' Then the culprit arose in open court and said, 'What is that to me?' 'And sure enough,' concluded Garman, leaning over his desk and fixing us with his piercing gaze, 'what was it to him?' "<sup>1</sup> A student mind would need a high initial inertia to withstand a push of that sort, particularly with Garman behind it. As for the way a teacher can work upon the students' brasher suggestions, one need only mention the name of Socrates, who was the first and finest exponent of the maieutic pedagogy I am urging.

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1. Walter Dyer in Houston Peterson's *Great Teachers*, p.116.



What sort of person must one be to do such teaching successfully? When I run over in memory the great teachers I have known or read about, I am impressed less by their likeness than by their diversity; they seem to resemble each other in nothing but their devotion to their subject; and of course bad teachers may show that too. One's first attempts at generalization all seem to break down. We sometimes hear it said confidently that every effective teacher must be himself an active producer; he must contribute, and go on contributing, to his field. In some sense this is no doubt true; still, Garman never wrote a book in his life. And a former teacher of mine who had studied under the two leading physicists of his time, used to say that there was only one worse teacher of physics in Europe than Kelvin in Glasgow, and that was Helmholtz in Berlin. Again, George Herbert Palmer, in his essay on *The Ideal Teacher*, says that the first prerequisite for the successful teacher is vicariousness, the power to put ourselves in others' places. He says that "it is in this chief business of the artistic teacher, to labor imaginatively himself in order to diminish the labors of his slender pupil, that most of our failures occur." That such vicariousness is necessary for the best classroom give-and-take is no doubt true. But there have been effective teachers whose skill did not lie in such give-and-take. Edward Caird was a great teacher of philosophy, but from the peak of high seriousness on which he lived he found it notoriously hard to descend to the somewhat frivolous flats on which the youth around him lived. A former pupil of his has told me how he manfully strove to do so in his Sunday breakfasts at Balliol, but even there he was singularly awkward in establishing contact; he would break an uneasy pre-prandial silence by turning dutifully to the man on his left and inquiring in his Scotch burr, "Mr. Jones, ar-r-re you familiar-r with the wor-rks of Sir-r Walter-r Scott?" But for all his remoteness from the students' minds, they found in him, as one of them has said, "the wisest and best man they had known," and therefore they were deeply concerned to understand him and concerned very little about his failure to understand them. Indeed Professor Sheldon has remarked that we teach too well in this country, that in our anxiety to cross the bridge to our students we often fail to develop the stature that will arouse in the students any anxiety to cross the bridge to us.

We are sometimes told, once more, that the sense of humor is indispensable to the teacher. But it is no more essential in philosophical than in other good teaching, and it has not always been present there. It was predicted of Thomas Arnold that if he were appointed headmaster of Rugby, he would change the face of education in England, and he fulfilled the prediction; but we are told that "humour appeared to him a rather profane indiscretion." Indeed the attempt to find any common denominator among the great teachers is so difficult that I am tempted to defer it for a time and to take the easier task first. What are the leading diversities of type among teachers of philosophy who have achieved outstanding success?

First there are the great lecturers; for though it has just been said that lecturing is not the most effective type of teaching, there is no denying that it has been done with power. Of such lecturing there seem to be two main varieties. First there is a type that is almost that of the master orator. When Bossuet expounded his philosophy of history and Fichte romanticized on the German spirit, their auditors seem to have found them irresistible. To carry the oratorical temper and manner into the classroom has been less dangerous in some times and countries than in others. In Scotland it has been done repeatedly and with notable success. Though Thomas Chalmers and John Caird are known primarily as preachers, both also were professors, Chalmers at St. Andrews, Caird at Glasgow. Both thought and wrote and spoke so naturally in oratorical form that it was effortless with them; they wrote their love-letters in it. And -- what is not always true of orators -- they were men of extraordinary simplicity and modesty who happened to be born, like their fellow-countryman Burns, with a genius for one kind of expression; and when they left the pulpit for the classroom, they could not leave their nature behind. Of Chalmers we are told that "he had a lavish gift of diction, a profusion of powerful and gorgeous sentences which gathered an irresistible momentum and impetus as they rolled on"; and the dominance he exercised by this magic of speech seems, as we now read about it, to be hardly explicable short of group hypnosis. John Caird, brother of Edward, was less of a magician, though he was master of a more chaste oratorical style. Anyone who reads his Gifford lectures or even his little book on Spinoza, will know what is meant by saying that he thought and wrote as an orator. Still we feel that all this, however appropriate in its time, belongs to a bygone generation. Students are less ready than they once were to let themselves be swept across gaps in the argument by the momentum of eloquence, however powerful, and one would be a little apprehensive even for Caird or Chalmers before an audience of our young sharpshooters of today.



The best lecturing of our time belongs to another type. The transition to it from this earlier form may be seen in Bergson. Those who have heard Bergson (as, unhappily, I have not), describe him as the finest embodiment of the French academic ideal, in whom lucidity and grace were combined in inimitable fashion. But even in those remarkable lectures which attracted to his classroom crowds of the Paris intelligentsia, we of today are likely to find a not quite agreeable note of the full-dress performance. We like clarity; we like polish; we do not like even the appearance of studied effects or any suggestion of the artificial. While we want as much as ever that orderly and easy unfolding of a subject that marks the mastery of it, we prefer the unfolding to come not in rounded rhetorical periods, but in plain straightforward terms that allow us to forget the manner in the matter. We are suspicious of appeals to feeling and even of the mild Bergsonian mysticism; philosophy has become more prosaic; and among young philosophers there is a declining sense of the importance of being earnest. The new type of lecturing, in which an intellectually sophisticated tale is plainly told is exemplified at its best, perhaps, by Professor H. H. Price, who without ever leaving the track of the argument and without any compromise of precision, holds the attention of packed Oxford lecture-rooms as he deals with the technical questions of logic and the theory of knowledge. In grateful memory of student days, I should like to mention two other lecturers who, though they differed widely in other things, possessed alike a remarkable power of quiet and lucid exposition. One is Dewitt Parker of Michigan, whose recent loss has been felt so keenly. The other is William Pepperell Montague of Columbia. Like others of Montague's students, I found in his method, which is that of a slow and orderly march from one cardinal point to another, a very strong temptation to go and do likewise. Indeed the attraction has been somewhat dangerous, for I have often felt the seduction of his method pulling me out of the little orbit in which I naturally revolved.

But there are plenty of notable teachers whom one does not think of as lecturers of either type. There is a third class who impress by the sheer massiveness and weight of their learning, men like Acton and Stubbs in history and Saintsbury in literature. The natural habitat of such scholars is Germany. A few months before the first World War, as a young and wandering student, I stopped for a day or two at Leipzig to see and hear one of these luminaries, Wundt; and a little later I heard another, Windelband, at Heidelberg. The outward differences between them were striking. Windelband, bent and worn, his grey hair falling to his collar, hobbled to the rostrum and remained seated there while he lectured, his face sallow, sorrowful, and drawn. Wundt, a large powerful figure and a fountain of energy at eighty-one, gave an impression, as he strode into the room and stood through his easily delivered lecture, that he could go on doing this all day. Both had their applauding audiences of eager note-takers completely in their thrall. But what gained them veneration was not primarily the arts of the lecture-room; nor perhaps could either of these men, eminent as they were as professors, be described as a thinker of the first order. The obvious excitement among those listening to them, an excitement that I fully shared, grew from the respect that everyone felt for the immense wealth that lay in the background, a magisterial range of learning that had been recorded in voluminous writings and seemed still in complete command.

But it is not invariably learning that gives power to the historian of philosophy; and here we come to a fourth type of teacher. Kuno Fischer was a learned man, but he seems also to have had in unusual measure that special gift of the historian, the power of living in the past imaginatively, and he had, further, that sense of the dramatic that makes it live for others, a sense that went at times to the verge of the theatrical. Alfred Lloyd told me long ago that Fischer might open a lecture on British philosophy with an exuberant verbal stage-setting; "It was a crisp and glorious day in autumn. Francis, Lord Verulam, was taking a walk down Piccadilly," and so on into Bacon's personality and relations with his time. The effervescent delight of the lecturer in both the past scene and the present performance somehow carried it off. I have known one teacher who, without any of this resort of the near-theatrical, achieved a similar infectious re-feeling and re-living of the past. This was F. J. E. Woodbridge. Those who know Woodbridge only through his writing can have little notion of the way he made the characters of Plato's dialogues live and breath for his classes on Morningside Heights thirty years ago. The lectures were at times rambling and ill-proportioned, and delivered from notes jotted down in the commuter's train or in moments snatched from his work as Graduate Dean; and his view of Plato, I believe, is unorthodox. But even if his Plato never lived in the past, he certainly did in that classroom; and for those of us who heard Woodbridge, with his ready laughter, his wise, unpremeditated aphorisms, his luminous digressions, and his gay sense of being again in the morning of the



world, there will always be a light of special quality falling across the market-place of Athens and upon 'the son of Apollo' whom he singled out for us there.

His way of teaching philosophy is close to that of another and fifth type, the humanist. Philosophy moves in abstractions. To some students it seems as bleakly impersonal as algebra. The teacher therefore who sees how it is implied in the decisions of ordinary life and how, if taken seriously, it may return upon that life to transform its feeling, character, and action, has a wide gate of his own into the minds of his students. Teachers of this type are growing rarer perhaps as philosophy moves out of its old affiliation with the humanities into its new entente with the sciences. But that a teacher who comes into it from the sciences need not lack this pervading humanity is shown by the case of William James. Of course James was a pragmatist and hence could insist on the human and practical bearings of theism and atheism, of absolutism and empiricism, in a way that to most of us would seem hardly relevant. But whether James was a pragmatist or not, he would still have invested with interest everything he said.

This quality of interestingness is elusive when we try to analyze it, though it is easy enough to recognize in either speaking or writing. In the field of history, for example, everyone perceives that Froude has it, in social criticism Shaw, in biography Strachey, in science T. H. Huxley, in the study of language the irrepressible Mencken. Part of the secret lies, as some of these examples suggest, in a quality dangerous to the philosopher, the lack of objectivity. I do not mean by this the failure to see things as they are, though that is too often involved; I mean the continual bathing of the subject in one's feeling about it, a hissing and handclapping between the lines, the maintenance of a little private off-stage orchestra registering the importance, the pathos, the humor, the absurdity, the nobility, of what is being reported. Not of course that these are registered in explicit comment; it belongs to the art of writers like Strachey so to incorporate their feelings in their portraits as to give the impression of photographic reporting. Now I think it must be admitted that those who in this way suffuse themselves over their subject are more interesting than those who keep themselves scrupulously out of it, and therefore that those who are most objective pay a price in the loss of interest that is hardly just.

I have often thought of the spectacle presented a generation or two ago by Oxford and Cambridge, where two of the greatest teachers of the time were simultaneously at work. No perceptive reader of T. H. Green can fail to feel beneath his elaborate sentences the ground-swell of intense moral earnestness, and it may be that this pervasive feeling had something to do with the conclusions, so satisfying to the religious aspiration of himself and his hearers, which he was expounding. At any rate these hearers were quick to catch the emotional overtones and undertones, just as readers of the fifth book of Spinoza's Ethics have often been moved as much by the passion between the lines as by the lines themselves; and Green's classroom was full to the doors with reverent disciples. Green's contemporary at Cambridge was a devotee, if ever there was one, of pure white light. Sidgwick's writing and teaching were antiseptically free of any personal infection; he was concerned solely and invariably with the objective state of the case. And while Green was addressing crowded halls at Oxford, Sidgwick was lecturing to perhaps eight or ten at Cambridge. No doubt the different roles of philosophy at the two universities had something to do with this. But there was more involved. Neither in his teaching nor in his singularly subtle and lucid writing did Sidgwick make any appeal except to the pure intelligence. Green was philosopher, preacher and prophet rolled into one.

Of the two types of mind, Sidgwick is more likely to be right, Green to wake interest in philosophy. A. E. Housman said that the love of truth is the faintest of human passions, and certainly most students find pure unsweetened theory a Spartan diet. And there have been admirable teachers who did manage to sweeten it by infusions of their own humanity, whether at the cost of exactness we need not here say. Friedrich Paulsen was one of this attractive group. I wish I could find an introduction to philosophy that is at once abreast of the times and written with the warm humanity of his old book. Though too late to sit under Palmer at Harvard, I gather that he too, steeped as he was in ancient and modern literature, brought to his teaching an unusual imaginativeness and richness of resource. It is hard to believe that wealth of spirit is incompatible with exact thinking, and for the sake of our standing in the academic community I only wish we had more such people as Palmer and Paulsen.

Nevertheless it is the sixth and last type of teacher on my list that suits best the demands



of our day. It is also the type that represents best, I suspect, that dialogue of the soul with itself which philosophy essentially is. This type is the dialectical midwife, skilled in revealing to the student what he means and what his meaning implies, the teacher with the Socratic gift of starting where the student is and carrying him back step by lucid step to his ultimate presuppositions. Unfortunately neither the German lecture method nor the American class method lends itself naturally to this process, and if we are to find it at its best, we must go to the English universities, with their tradition of individual teaching. To hear H. W. B. Joseph or H. A. Prichard or H. H. Joachim at work on a student was to catch philosophy both in vivid act and in peculiarly effective transmission. The method was to get the student to offer an opinion or an argument, and then put on him unrelenting pressure, varying in kind from case to case, to state his position more accurately, to realize its difficulties, to bring to light and examine its assumptions, in brief to sweep the cobwebs out of his thought and get things clear. For the student it was often a penitential business, a set of ordeals by fire and water; and sometimes it would take two or three sessions to push the first paragraph of his ill-starred little essay through the relentless gauntlet. What the question was that aroused all the self-searching was not of much importance and perhaps was soon forgotten. That did not matter. What did matter was that the student realized, probably for the first time, what responsible thought and statement meant. With the aid of an expert teacher, too faithful not to be ruthless, he managed to achieve these once for himself; and from that moment on, whether he ever achieved them again or not, the pattern of good work was laid up in his mind; he knew what it meant, knew what it cost, and knew the heady delight of compassing it. There are psychologists who tell us that college studies have little transfer value. They should have worked under teachers like these. They would have found, as Mill did of his father's stern discipline, that their thinking on every subject was affected by it profoundly, not so much in substance, of course, as in standard and mode of attack. If this is what Garfield meant when he spoke of Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and himself on the other, I agree that it is the ideal education.

On second thought, however, it is not ideal in all cases. If I were eighteen or twenty, and Mark Hopkins were confronting me on the other end of that log, I suspect I should be overpowered. That is my reservation about the English method; the disparity between the boy and the tutor is often so great -- in my own case it was abysmal -- that the youngster is not unlikely to be reduced to a paralyzed silence in the opening passages of the encounter. Hence there is much to be said for the variation of the English method that was introduced by President Aydelotte at Swarthmore. There the method remains Socratic; but the discussion is conducted in a group of four to six, and it goes on for some three hours. In these discussions, if one member is flattened by the instructor, he is hors de combat only temporarily. While the others come to his rescue or press some point of their own, he can collect his wits and reinflate his ego.

In my own experiments with this method, I felt that any size over six reduced the effectiveness notably, and I confess that I have never been able to apply it to full-sized classes with anything like the same satisfaction. But I do know teachers who have done this with seemingly great success. The problem of so applying it is that of 'the many and the one.' The essence of the method lies in adaptation to individual need, and if the instructor ignores the many while he probes the bottomless confusions of the one, the class is only too likely to set both of them down as bores. But if we may assume that the main difficulties in a given problem are about the same for the various students, the method should be extensible from group to class. A teacher of great vitality, humor, and adroitness like Socrates can convert a group discussion into a joint quest in which every member feels that he is participating whether he does so vocally or not. And I suspect that it is in this extension of Socratic method that our best hope lies. The alternatives on either side of it must, I think, be rejected, the lecture method because it is so inefficient, the method of individual tuition because, with American numbers, it would involve intolerable expense.

If we are willing to grant that the most effective type of teacher is the Socratic dialectician, and that in our own time and place he must work not with an individual but with a group or class, what are the qualities he must have if he is to apply his art successfully? Three qualities seem to me of outstanding importance.

First, zeal for what he is doing. This means two things. It means of course enthusiasm for his subject. In theory, as we saw at the outset, the student who is already interested may as well or better go to a book. The reason why teachers are needed is that the interest of



most students is only half awakened and must be aroused, if at all, by contagion from other persons. And persons with a real fascination for speculative problems, who enjoy more than anything else the following of an argument where it leads, are not very common; indeed the student may never have met one. If he has not, he ought to meet one in his first philosophy classroom. George Herbert Palmer confesses that when President Eliot proposed to introduce a graduate school at Harvard, he opposed it on the ground that it would be at the expense of undergraduate teaching, but that once it had arrived, he had to reverse himself and support it just for its value to that teaching. A corps of inquirers engaged in philosophizing on the frontiers of their subject, as they had to be if they were to draw graduate students, proved a more effective teaching body because it was keeping alive that vital interest which is at once the spring of productive work and the spark that lights the flame in others. We have seen that philosophy consists of philosophizing. We might almost add that teaching it consists of that also. To be sure, there is no fixed ratio between productiveness and strength as a teacher; some fertile philosophers have been bad teachers, and some fine teachers (we have mentioned Garman) have written little. But philosophic creativeness is not confined to writing. And unless that drive is there which makes one think for the love of it whether the results are recorded or not, one will lack, I think, the first qualification of the philosophic teacher.

But the zest here in mind means more than interest in one's subject. It means also pleasure in the practice of one's art. The late Professor Billy Phelps is estimated very variously as philosopher and critic, but it appears to be the fact that he awakened more minds to an interest in literature than any other teacher in the two centuries and a half of Yale history. Part of the secret surely lies in the remark in his Autobiography that he used to lie in bed of a morning and think with delight of his first class. In my observation of the American teacher, this habit is less than universal. As the year drags out its length, sapping his resources through the endless process of giving out, he acquires the lines of the teacher's face, harassed, conscientious, worried, a little sharp and meagre. The class in epistemology meets at 11; there have been two previous classes; there was a pile of papers to read last night; he has hardly been able to give a thought to his preparation. When 11 o'clock comes, he is tired and on the defensive. He knows he has not quite caught or answered Smith's acute objection, and that his statement of his own position is wordy and blurred. This sort of statement may become a habit, and there is something very unconvincing about people who are worried and on the defensive; moods are extremely infectious. A few days ago I picked up William James's admirable old Talks to Teachers and found this:

They talk much in pedagogic circles today about the duty of the teacher to prepare for every lesson in advance. To some extent this is useful. But we Yankees are assuredly not those to whom such a general doctrine should be preached. We are only too careful as it is. The advice I should give to most teachers would be in the words of one who is herself an admirable teacher. Prepare yourself in the subject so well that it shall be always on tap; then in the class-room trust your spontaneity and fling away all further care.<sup>2</sup>

The dialectic method of teaching puts a premium on freshness of wits. One never knows what will arise; one must be ready for all contingencies, and since these contingencies in philosophy are virtually infinite, one can be ready only in spirit and not in detail. One must bring to class a touch of abandon, a pleasure in the adventure itself, an appetite for the delights of the chase.

We'll hunt down (truth) together  
Pluck out his flying feather,  
And teach his feet a measure,  
And find his mouth a rein.

Joint philosophic pursuit is an arduous business and students will not enjoy it under a leader weary and bedraggled. Lecturing is a different matter. One can lecture with some effectiveness, at least from a text, in a state of spiritual exhaustion. But for philosophy as dialectic,

2. Talks to Teachers on Psychology, p.222.



one ounce of freshness of mind is worth pounds of laborious preparation.

Next after zest, comes a more intellectual quality which again is a double one, a combination of flexibility and control. How important these are is clear enough when they are absent. There are teachers, including all of us on certain days, who have quite forgotten how a student responds to the first appearance of great philosophical ideas, for example, that everything he says is determined, or that the hills and rivers he sees are 'in his mind.' These were exciting suggestions to us once; now, after countless exposures to them, they are matters of course. To the students, the arguments we offer for them may seem strangely stolid, pedantic, and technical; as for ourselves, we saw fifteen years ago that the questions the students are raising were really beside the point; yet here they are again. So between the desk and the front row a fog descends, on the yonder side of which is a regiment of expressionless faces, on the hither side a soliloquy proceeding in quiet desperation from the rostrum. That is what I call the want of flexibility. Its complement is the want of control. I have known teachers who in their anxiety to include everyone in the discussion and give everyone his due, were ready to go off in pursuit of any will-o'-the-wisp of suggestion that might issue from the darkest marshes of the student mind, with the result that the students themselves came away grumbling about the aimlessness of it all. What is wanting here is control.

As regards flexibility, the advantage seems to lie with the young teacher. He is closer to the youth before him; he is more likely to know where their complexes lie. I have come to realize rather sadly that when the discussion touches on certain areas of experience, I am talking to my students across a widening gap. I feel uncertain of what is going on in their minds about social radicalism, about religion, and even more about sex; I know their attitudes are deeply different from those of my student days, but just how, I am not clear. The result is that there is no sureness of touch in my handling of these things. In an ethics class consisting of boys who have taken Kinsey in stride, to deal with a question touching on sex with the solemn, self-conscious indirectness of some decades ago would be like wearing a Prince Albert coat in the classroom. Since in these regions I am not sure of my ground, I find myself avoiding them and fleeing when no man pursueth. That is a failure in flexibility. Is it a failure necessary to advancing years? No, I do not think so. At least an imaginative older man who keeps his bridges in repair is a more effective teacher than an unimaginative young one.

But flexibility is not merely a matter of keeping abreast of changing youth. It means too a habitual looking at things from the other end of the question-and-answer relation. It may exhibit itself in so small an item as one's timing in calling a student's name. Palmer tells how when the going was heavy in one of his ethics classes, he tried to force some reflection out of his boys by the process of direct squeeze. After talking a while about the problem at issue, he formulated an elaborate case which he thought crucial, and asked how it should be decided. "Mr. Jones, how would you decide it?" Jones, taken by surprise, reddened, stumbled about, and shortly came to a dead stop. So did everyone else who was called on. Palmer went home, he says, "hoping that I might never have such a stupid lot of students again. Suddenly it flashed upon me that it was I who was stupid. That is usually the case when a class fails; it is the teacher's fault. The next day I went back prepared to begin at the right end. I began, 'Oh, Mr. Jones.' He rose, and I proceeded to state the situation as before. By the time I paused he had collected his wits, had worked off his superfluous flurry, and was ready to give me an admirable answer. Indeed, in a few minutes the whole class was engaged in an eager discussion." When students take you to be lecturing to them, they are not paying the degree of attention necessary to handle a complex question that darts down at them out of the blue; and if they are expected to, they will feel the unfairness of it, though perhaps not knowing why. "Occupied as I was," says Palmer, "with my end of the story, the questioning end, I had not worked in that double-ended fashion which alone can bring the teacher success."

It is in the other side of this process, control, that the veteran teacher comes into his own. Students are often impatient of philosophy because it seems to resolve itself into talky-talk, in which nothing ever gets settled. It is therefore peculiarly important that in leading a philosophical discussion one should hold the reins firmly in hand. Of course a discussion is not a route march like a lecture; it is rather a zigzag into the wind, as in a sailboat; but unless it is moving in some direction and at a perceptible rate, it will soon seem futile. Here is where the experienced pilot scores. Since he has repeatedly sailed the course before, he



will know where the shallows lie and what channels lead to port. If he is discussing the mind-body problem and comes to interactionism, he will probably begin by bringing home to the students that they all really believe in it, that they assume body to act on mind in every perception, and mind on body in almost every act of will. Why, then, should great philosophers have rejected the view? The lecturer will merely tell his students. The teacher will draw it out of them. And in his drawing, he may draw three or four black balls to one white one. His skill will lie in judiciously getting rid of the black ones and holding on to the white. Being an old hand, he will know that if a student comes up with the query how two things with nothing in common can get a purchase on each other, or how one thing can produce another without using up energy, the craft has swung into a promising channel.

With nearly all philosophic problems the best beginning lies in common sense; and no matter how far the student moves from the starting-point, he should feel at every step that it is still essentially common sense, and not some wire-drawn intellectual hocus-pocus, that is carrying him along. This feeling is particularly needed in the theory of knowledge. I used to enjoy the sensation of throwing Berkeley at students as a sort of bomb-shell, but I found that the effect on the better among them was to make them feel that if this was philosophy, the whole business was a somewhat melodramatic trick. I no longer use Berkeley as a bomb. I begin with common sense realism, suggesting that we stick to it if we can. The students soon discover that they cannot; distant stars and bent spoons - now well worn as well as bent - prove too much for them. They are then ready to move on with conviction to the next position. Indeed with a little prodding and pushing, they can be made to move of their own volition down the long row of perceptual theories till they see Hume at the end of the vista, waiting with his sardonic smile. To arrive at Hume in this manner is to feel to the full the power of his argument and to be driven into a desperate attempt of one's own to find some epistemological alley into which one can sidle off. It may be suggested that these positions and their difficulties could be much more incisively put in the course of a few lectures. Undoubtedly they could. All one can say is that between hearing someone demonstrate a conclusion and reaching it by one's own groping trial and error there is a world of educational difference, the difference in this case between being a student of philosophy and being oneself a philosopher.

One final quality I must name, and one of immense importance. It is the quality of clearness. In a subject where there are and can be no lantern slides, exhibits, or experiments, where all paths lead through abstraction and one can see only with the eye of the mind, clearness is indispensable. Indeed the effort to attain it is required of every writer and teacher in virtue of the mere humanity of which we have spoken; obscurity is a defect in humanity, a defect in the imagination needed to see what would make crooked paths straight for others. A teacher whom I gratefully remember, William Ernest Hocking, said of a teacher of his own that clarity was "his token of good faith with his hearers...the element of unselfishness in expression: if one were thinking or writing for oneself, clarity and simplicity might be neglected; if one thought or wrote for others, they were inescapable considerations." "La clarte est la politesse."

If we are to talk clearly to beginners in philosophy, we must bear in mind what an effort it is for them to think in abstractions at all. Boys who, these many years, have been applying hammers to nails with the most expert causal efficacy will be quite blank when the question of causal efficacy comes up in the classroom. The step from things to the qualities and relations of those things is a curiously long one. Kant seems to have thought that because every thing exemplifies many qualities and relations at once, illustrations were bound to be ambiguous and had best be avoided. This is surely an error, an error that may account in some measure for the embarrassment of his moral philosophy when confronted with concrete cases. Philosophy not only springs from the concrete; it will get lost if it ever springs far. The teacher of it, though without apparatus of his own, has the advantage that almost anything will serve his purpose; he has an infinite apparatus ready to his hand, for ideally piled high around his desk are all the billiard-balls, hammers and nails, arresting particular cases of justice and beauty, purpose and mechanism, coherence and correspondence, that he could wish. If he is wise, he will use these incessantly. He will keep touching the earth like Antaeus to get fresh strength; and if he soars into abstraction, as he must, and has the gift of lucidity of a Clifford, McTaggart, or Shaw, he will know as if by instinct how long he can stay aloft and when to descend.

The teacher who owns these qualities -- zest, flexibility and control, lucidity -- has in philosophy an instrument of education that is without any equal. His success is not to be



estimated by the number of his disciples. In a university where, if things are in a healthy, state, he will have many colleagues seeking to refute him, he may never make one convert. But the influence of most philosophy teachers lies rather in their method than in their conclusions. And as the whole history of western thought has been different because twenty-odd centuries ago there lived an unprepossessing man who wrote nothing, but had a passion for teaching and owned in transcendent measure these qualities of the great teacher, so in many communities of this country the work of the law and the church, the business man and the housewife, is conducted on a different level of order, competence, and perspective, because years ago some college teacher showed how a mind might be used. His own little pellet of truth may have been lost long ago in the sea. But the ripples started by it in the form of better thought and speech remain and widen out. It is in this sort of immortality, vicarious and for the most part anonymous, that the teacher must look for his truest success.



# THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY IN BOSTON UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

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A conference on the teaching of philosophy is in grave danger of becoming too philosophical. Philosophers love abstractions, first principles, ultimates. In the present paper the aim is a sedulous avoidance of abstractions, and a firm rootage in experience. After all, there are philosophers who respect experience, and the deliberations of this Conference are evidence of their being.

The concrete discussion of this paper is based on various aspects of the experiences of the department of philosophy of Boston University. That department has had a unique history. The first head of the department, who was also the first dean of the Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, as it was called in those days, was Borden Parker Bowne. Dr. Bowne had an extraordinary conception of the place of philosophy in education. On the one hand, his own methods of teaching violated every known rule of pedagogy. He would sit magisterially at his desk facing the class, with his own textbook open before him; and his lectures, rarely interrupted by questions from either side of the desk, consisted largely in readings from his own books with occasional embellishments. Yet anyone who sat in his classroom underwent an experience of rare intellectual elevation and insight, and was challenged to think critically and constructively with his whole mind. Few American teachers of philosophy have been able to generate in their students a more active and life-long interest in philosophy than Bowne succeeded in arousing.

The secret of Bowne's pre-eminence as a teacher did not lie, as is evident, in his pedagogical methods (although he knew how to torture minds into thinking by his masterly "home quizzes") but largely in his personality and in the content of his philosophy, which laid fundamental stress on the dignity and metaphysical significance of personality.

No one can be a successful teacher of philosophy unless he is firmly convinced of the value and the basic importance of philosophy both for education and for life. Philosophy, by its very nature, is not, and should not be, just one more department, or a subject quaintly technical and purely abstract, without relevance to life. Philosophy is a search for unified meaning and for critical evaluation of all aspects of experience and knowledge in their interrelations. The philosopher is both a spectator of all time and all being and also a guide of life; while he emphasizes the speculative reason, he also sees the significance of the practical reason and perhaps believes in its primacy over the speculative, sharing with Lotze the conviction that the true beginning of metaphysics lies in ethics. It is true that some philosophers, like Bertrand Russell, so conceive philosophy as to exclude values from its domain; but such philosophers must proffer a philosophical justification of such exclusion. In a sense, then, the philosopher is not a specialist but a generalist. He has no limited field; all fields are his field, not in the sense that he must himself do the work of every science and art and practical achievement, but in the sense that he must survey their interrelations and offer some reasonable interpretation of their meaning as a whole to the mind as a whole. The philosopher, then, sees his task as both climactic and fundamental. He has to furnish the capstone to the edifice of knowledge and experience, and he has to explore its foundations and presuppositions. Every human being needs some sort of idea about the rootage and foundation of his life, and about its unity and total purpose. Thus, philosophy is essential to man as such. Everything that is investigated in a university is essential to civilization as a whole and contributes to man's total culture. But not every subject is essential to every man. Philosophy, whether professional or amateur, is essential on some level to every human individual who is mature and thoughtful.

1. Address read in the absence of Professor Brightman at the final plenary session of the conference. (Ed.)



Reasonings of this sort guided Borden Parker Bowne in his organization of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in Boston University. During the early years of his administration he far outdid Robert M. Hutchins in his later theories at Chicago. Bowne believed that the teaching of philosophy was so fundamental to all teaching and research that for some time he took the degree of doctor of philosophy seriously and literally in the full sense. Every doctor of philosophy in Bowne's Graduate School in the first years was required to make philosophy his major field. He might, it is true, have an extensive minor in English or chemistry, mathematics or history, German or Sanskrit; but his major field must be philosophy. Later in his administration Bowne relaxed the strictness of his principles, but he never surrendered the ideal on which they rested. Is it not true that every teacher of philosophy must in some degree share this ideal or else compromise his devotion to philosophy and his philosophical insight?

After Bowne's death in 1910, the department of philosophy in Boston University has sought for other means of interpreting philosophy to the academic community. There is just going into effect at the present time a requirement in the College of Liberal Arts which has been adopted by the faculty as a result of a long period of discussion characteristic of deliberative bodies in general and of faculties in particular. This requirement consists of a two-hour course through the year, recommended for juniors, but required of all candidates for the bachelor's degree at some time in their course. The first semester, after introductory material bearing on the nature of philosophy and possible criteria of truth, deals chiefly with ethics. The second semester is more metaphysical and attempts a consideration of philosophical problems connected with thought about man, about nature, and about God. The course is now in its second year of operation and will not go fully into effect until next year, when the freshmen who entered under the new requirements will be juniors. Although there is difference of opinion among philosophers whether it is wise to make philosophy a requirement, thus far the effect of this course seems to have been wholesome; and some who opposed the principle of requirement have become convinced of its wisdom. In Bowne's day, his basic courses were required of all in the College and the effect in producing a philosophical atmosphere was remarkable. The trend away from the free elective system seems to be sound, especially in the case of philosophy.

The view of the function of philosophy as basic to all education and as a correlator of knowledge is being taken seriously by the present department of philosophy, as well as by the faculty of the Boston University College of Liberal Arts, albeit not in Bowne's exaggerated sense as typified in his theory of the doctorate in philosophy. The problem of how the teacher of philosophy can make philosophy available and attractive to the students who need philosophical methods and insights is a difficult one. He may turn his courses into a circus; he may relax the severity of requirements in order to attract those who do not share the labor theory of value; he may even use cheap methods in advising students against other subjects or teachers in order to build up a personal following. A teacher of philosophy may do these things; but if he does, he has ceased to function as a philosopher. The true philosopher will set his face firmly against all such devices and tricks. On the other hand, he will err seriously in his obligation to his college or university if he retreats to the ivory tower and, conscious of his own merits and those of philosophy, relies on sheer excellence to attract those who, perhaps, are not passionately devoted already to the Platonic Form of excellence.

What, then, is the teacher of philosophy to do? One possible procedure has been developed in recent years in the department of philosophy at Boston University with the full co-operation of the faculty. The development began in connection with a critical examination of the system of concentration in one field as the normal procedure for the junior and senior years. This system is now very widespread. While it has merits, it has one pernicious result. It tends to turn each department into an island somewhat like Fichte's "Geschlossener Handelsstaat," which discourages free trade in the intellectual world and builds a tariff wall, which becomes a veritable wall of flame through which nothing can enter or depart. Or, to change the metaphor, it is the original iron curtain. Its impermeability is perhaps most obvious in the sciences, but to a greater or less extent it functions in most departments. To some extent its vicious results are softened by the so-called related courses; and philosophy often profits by the requirement or recommendation of such subjects as history of philosophy or aesthetics or philosophy of science as related subjects in history or English or fine arts or physics or other fields. This solution is somewhat left to chance and is not a fully adequate way out of the dilemma of island-concentration.



The new development began, not from the initiative of the department of philosophy, but rather from the faculty itself. As in most colleges, there are in Boston University's College of Liberal Arts numerous students contemplating graduate studies in some field or religion: possibly in theology, in religious education, in some form of social work. The faculty had no program that fitted the needs of this group. A representative committee was appointed which worked out the following plan. A joint field of concentration was proposed known as "Concentration in Philosophy and Sociology." As is usual, the program was divided into Principal Courses and Related Courses. The minimum requirement in Principal Courses is thirty semester hours. At least twelve semester hours must be taken in philosophy and at least twelve in sociology. The remaining six or more may be distributed as the student and advisor deem best. Besides the Principal Courses, eighteen hours of Related Courses are required. These must be at least six hours from each of the following groups: education, fine arts, and psychology. This program was adopted unanimously by the faculty and has been in successful operation for several years. Either the chairman of sociology or the chairman of philosophy may serve as major professor.

More recently the department of philosophy has become conscious of its cross-fertilizing function in the relating of different fields. The experiment of philosophy-sociology was so satisfactory that the department began to look around for other opportunities. Fortunately, at the same time the same idea had occurred to the chairman of the department of psychology. For several semesters plans were discussed and joint meetings held. Finally the two departments came to agreement, and again the faculty adopted the plan as proposed. The plan is somewhat more rigid in psychology-philosophy than in the combination with sociology. For example, while the general hour requirements are the same (a total of 48 as a minimum), there are prerequisites of four hours in philosophy and six in psychology; and the specific courses to be taken are more largely prescribed, so that only seven elective hours remain. In addition to the courses, attendance on a monthly symposium is required without credit, at which papers and talks are given and free interdepartmental discussion is stimulated.

Shortly after the adoption of this plan, the department of philosophy and the recently organized department of religion entered into joint discussions. Religion as yet has no field of concentration of its own and does not for the present desire it. But the fields of philosophy and religion have historically been closely related, and it is all but impossible to study religion without raising philosophical problems. Therefore a joint field of concentration of religion-philosophy seemed very appropriate. The two departments agreed on a plan in some respects similar to the philosophy-sociology one, which prescribes a minimum of thirty hours of Principal Courses, with at least twelve in each of the two departments, and six in either or both. The Related Courses are to include a minimum of eighteen hours of credit, including six hours from any three of the following: English, Fine Arts, History Psychology, and Sociology. In the combinations of philosophy with psychology and religion, as with sociology, the major professor may come from either department involved.

It seems to those of us who have been experimenting in this manner that philosophy is performing a proper function in thus extending its influence through other departments, and also in preserving the spirit of a truly liberal education as against the strong tendency in the direction of over-technical specialization among undergraduates. There is no reason why it should not be extended further. It may be added that the full requirements for each combination are printed at the head of the statement of courses for each department concerned (except that the religion-philosophy combination is so recent as not to be printed in the current catalogue).

In addition to these experiments exemplifying the function of the department of philosophy in education, the department has since the second semester of 1928-1929 carried on every year a course in The Teaching of Philosophy. The origin of this course may be of interest. Dr. Daniel L. Marsh, president of Boston University, attended a meeting of the Association of American Colleges at which vigorous complaints were voiced regarding the teaching abilities of the young Ph.D.'s who were employed on the faculties of colleges; and the universities were requested to take action to remove this impediment. President Marsh reported this request to the Boston University faculties. The department of philosophy at once took action to provide some instruction in the teaching of philosophy.



The policy of the department was necessarily restricted by a general policy of the College of Liberal Arts, which looks with disfavor on the use of graduate students as teachers in the College. The theory is that the students deserve the best we have, and that they ought not to be used as guinea pigs for immature teachers. This theory is good for students in Boston University, but it is rather hard on the graduate students and on their first victims when they begin teaching elsewhere. The best compromise we could devise was a course of the kind in question.

The Teaching of Philosophy is organized under the category of Directed Study. This means that most of the work is done by the students outside of class, with frequent and extended written reports. The entire group meets once a week for an hour to discuss the problems of the week and to canvass the criticisms which the professor has made on the written work previously handed in. In terms of semester hour credit, the course may be taken for three or more hours, depending on the amount of work done, the measuring rod being three hours of outside work for each semester hour credit.

From the very start of the course down to the present time, the main requirement has been the preparation of a detailed teaching plan for some specific course in the department. To encourage realism, each student selects some college or university where he would like to teach, and makes his plan conform in detail to the general calendar and requirements of that institution. He has to prepare a catalogue description of the course, as well as a statement of his aims in teaching it. The plan often appears in two parts: one, a schedule of assignments, requirements, and bibliography for the student; the other and fuller one, a guide to the instructor outlining in detail not only his lectures and discussions during the semester, but also the final examinations and incidental quizzes in full. The material for the students is mimeographed to be placed in their hands at the start, so that the students of these teachers will not complain that any requirement is "sprung" on them as a surprise attack.

Among the topics taken up when the course was first given are the following: the equipment of the teacher of philosophy; courses he will be expected to teach; the use of textbooks and other source materials; the preparation of bibliographies; the planning of courses as a whole with proper balance; the kind and purpose of assignments; the relative merits of lecture, discussion, recitation, written exercises, question syllabi, and the like; and the desirability of different methods in different courses. Other topics are the use of libraries; co-operation with the librarian; use of journals as well as books; dealings with book dealers and publishers; professional contacts both within and without the institution; learned societies; professional correspondence; classroom problems, such as discipline and ventilation; academic freedom and professional ethics. As the course has developed, books of value have appeared, notably the Report of the Commission of the American Philosophical Association, Philosophy in American Education. Barzun, Teacher in America, and Logan, The Academic Man, are used. The Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors contains much informing and stimulating material for such a course, as do articles in School and Society. The aim of the course is more to help the teacher as a total personality than to tell him exactly what methods to use in his classes. Variety and originality, rather than routine are encouraged.

Since this course has been conducted, attempts have been made to discover whether similar courses are offered. The only one hitherto discovered is one by Professor Hendel at Yale, where the chief emphasis is on the aims and motives of the teacher of philosophy; perhaps it might be called the philosophy of teaching. Information regarding such courses elsewhere will be gladly welcomed, as will suggestions for the improvement of this one.<sup>1</sup>

1. See "An Experiment in Teaching Teachers to Teach," by A. C. Benjamin, P.18 (Ed.)



## AN EXPERIMENT IN TEACHING TEACHERS TO TEACH

A. Cornelius Benjamin

University of Missouri

In the spring semester of 1948-49 an experimental graduate course in the Teaching of Philosophy was given at the University of Missouri. Eight students, all of them graduate majors in philosophy, registered for the course, which carried two hours of credit. Primary source material consisted of Philosophy in American Education by Brand Blanshard and others; secondary material consisted of Jacques Barzun's Teacher in America, Irwin Edman's Philosopher's Quest, and selections from current periodical literature.

At least three factors were responsible for introducing this course. In the first place, there has been a rapidly growing interest at the University of Missouri in problems of effective teaching. Courses in the teaching of history, of social studies, of English and of certain other subjects are already being given. For several years there has been an Arts and Science Committee on the Improvement of Instruction which has arranged lectures on problems of teaching, given usually at the beginning of the school year by members of the faculty, and acted as a clearing house for the interchange of information between departments concerning what was being done to improve teaching. The visiting of classes of new appointees by the departmental chairman or other senior member, followed by conference with the instructor, has been commonly practiced at Missouri. A program of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness is now being developed. Finally, last year the University of Missouri received a substantial grant from the Carnegie Foundation to devote to the improvement of teaching in the university and throughout the state.

In the second place, I have felt for some time that there was a serious gap in the training of most of our prospective teachers of philosophy. Many of them have either never thought about certain problems or have not refreshed their minds on them since beginning their training. I refer to the broad problems of the role of philosophy in effective living, of the charges commonly brought against philosophy, of the contributions of philosophy to liberal education and to the development of skills, of the place of philosophy in the current national and international scene, and so on. Such problems, if they were ever discussed at all, were treated incidentally and usually before the student was sufficiently familiar with the nature of philosophy to realize their significance. In view of the new role which the philosopher is being called upon to play we have a definite responsibility to prepare our students, and through them future students, for these tasks. A good example is the increased demand that is being put on philosophers to contribute to programs of general education.

In the third place, a subject as hard to teach as philosophy requires some attention to teaching techniques. While it may be partly true that teachers are born, not made, it is also true that teaching effectiveness can be improved by some attention to methods and to the formulation of goals and aims. Ideally the way to learn to teach is by teaching. But by taking a course in teaching methods one can often avoid bad habits before they have been formed, and he can generally profit by the suggestion of techniques and devices which have proved effective in the case of more experienced teachers.

The course was roughly divided into three parts. The first consisted of a discussion of the current demands on philosophy, the criticism of it, the replies of philosophy to these charges, and the possible contributions which philosophy might make both to the effective living of the individual life and to the harmonious adjustment of men to one another in society. The second part was devoted to a consideration of the role of philosophy in the curriculum. Here attention was paid to the contributions of philosophy to the "general" courses, both as an element of content and as offering the integrative principle which is so often lacking. Time was also devoted to the study of the "philosophy of" courses--philosophy of art, philosophy of science, philosophy of law, philosophy of history and other such courses for the pur-



pose of considering how they should be taught, who should teach them, and how they should function in the curriculum. The third part was devoted wholly to teaching and examining techniques. In addition to the discussion of general questions, such as how to conduct good discussions, how to lecture effectively, and how to prepare and grade examinations, the four basic courses (logic, introduction, ethics, and history of philosophy) were selected for detailed consideration. Four members of the staff each judged to be doing effective work in the teaching of one of these courses were selected, and each was invited to take charge of the class for one session and to lead the discussion of the aims of his course, its specific difficulties and problems, and the ways which he had found most effective in meeting and solving them.

The course was one of discussion throughout, with no formal lecturing. Each student was given an opportunity to try his hand at teaching by taking full charge of one of our beginning sections for one session. He then conferred with the regular instructor and with myself, and criticisms were made, and suggestions freely offered. Each member of the course was asked to prepare a complete outline, including day to day assignments, bibliography, examinations, etc., of one of the four courses as he would prefer to give it.

The values of such a course are hard to estimate. The students were enthusiastic about it and hoped it would be made a permanent part of our offerings. They liked particularly the portion which dealt with the broader setting of philosophy and felt that they were better prepared than would otherwise have been the case not only to teach philosophy but to contribute to the solutions of problems of curricular organization in any college in which they might teach. They reported that they gained much from the discussion of teaching techniques; whether they really did well depend on their willingness after a year or two of teaching to search out their notes and undertake a little self-examination. The members of the staff, I believe, profited by the course. Some attended all meetings and contributed to the discussion; others attended occasionally; those who directed the discussion of the teaching of specific courses apparently welcomed the opportunity to re-examine their own aims and methods.



## A REPORT ON THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY

John Henry Melzer

University of Kentucky

It is very difficult to gain information about the technical and practical sides of teaching on the higher educational level, because in fields other than philosophy the information comes largely either from the opinions of one man or from symposia of very small groups of people; and in philosophy very little has been written on the subject, probably because there is practically no outlet in print or otherwise for studies in the teaching of philosophy. What has been written is largely in terms of general principles rather than in the form of specific studies of the results of actual experimentation.

Efforts in this direction were initiated about thirteen years ago on the west coast as an adjunct to the annual philosophical association meeting. Later, in 1942, Max Black, fresh from the school of education in the University of London, gave a course in the teaching of philosophy at the University of Illinois. About a year later Brand Blanshard, Ducasse, and others made a kind of survey of opinion on the place of philosophy in American education without much stress on actual problems of classroom presentation of the subject. At the present time A.C. Benjamin has a course in the teaching of philosophy at the University of Missouri.<sup>1</sup>

Now one can readily see that a few papers at an annual meeting, a course given on the basis of the experiences of one or two men, and a study of the importance of philosophy in the educational context are long strides toward the goal of better teaching; but they do not actually take us to the place where we can share and receive the benefit of the progressive experimentation in the teaching of philosophy which is going on in the profession at large. For this reason the speaker requested and received from the University of Kentucky Research Fund Committee five hundred dollars for a survey of the experiences of the entire profession in all matters pertinent to the teaching of philosophy. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to report on the first successful attempt to gather the experiences of an entire profession in the teaching of a specialized field of study on the level of higher education.<sup>2</sup>

Over three hundred contributions, including practically every well-known name in the field--from Dewey to B.A.G. Fuller--were received. Added to these were a large number of letters from people who, even though they felt that they had nothing to contribute, wanted to express their interest in and approval of the project. These together with the contributors constituted almost half of the membership of the profession in the American Philosophical Association. One hundred and fifty of the contributors answered the full seven page questionnaire. This one hundred and fifty seems to be a fair sample of the entire profession as the post card survey, which was sent out later, substantiated the trends in teaching methods and organization of courses found in the full questionnaire.

One very interesting and very surprising revelation of the survey is that the philosophers have developed from thirty-five to fifty special techniques to handle particular problems in each of the basic courses. Hence there will be about one hundred and fifty special techniques described in the full published report. The full report will contain an exhaustive analysis

1. See p. 14 for Brightman's account of a similar course at Boston University. (Ed.)

2. Bruce Raup, Professor of Education in Columbia Teachers College, and Chairman of a Committee in the Philosophy of Education Society which is studying the teaching of the philosophy of education, wrote the speaker that after two years of work on such a project he felt that they had not accomplished very much, and that he and the committee would be very interested in the information gathered in this project.



and evaluation of not only the major aspects but also the minor trends and solutions to problems in terms of the experience of the entire group. It will also contain from two to six complete descriptions of experimental ways of handling each of the four basic courses. The report will be more than four hundred pages in length.<sup>1</sup> Our time limit tonight, however, will preclude any discussion of the very important and interesting special techniques and will cover only the major trends revealed in the survey.

The report tonight follows the three main divisions of the study: (1) the teaching of specific courses; (2) curriculum problems; (3) practical problems. Our survey shows that the philosophers are attempting to arrive at two major objectives in logic. The first is the systematic departmental requirement of acquaintance with the traditional elementary forms of deduction and induction, and the second is a decided emphasis on the functional aspect of the entire course of study. They are attempting to achieve these objectives by giving two or three semesters of logic instead of the traditional one. The first semester is devoted to a kind of selected and drilled elementary logic similar to my functional or Hahn and Moore's remedial logic. (There is a great deal of difference in method between the two.) The second semester is a completion of ordinary deduction and induction or a course in symbolic logic. Some are giving symbolic third, but very few consider symbolic suitable for elementary logic. There is a general tendency to put elementary logic on the freshman level as a kind of service course for all departments.

Nearly all stress the functional aspect as one of the major objectives of the course. Most of them use traditional deductive for the major part of the content of the course. And most of them have changed their method of teaching from the old lecture-quiz-final cycle to the highly interesting problem-discussion-case method. Finally, many of them insist that the change in objectives and teaching techniques accounts for the overflowing classes and renewed interest in elementary logic.

In introductory courses the objectives sought by our contributors vacillate between an attempt to build a systematic foundation for further investigation of philosophical problems and an attempt to integrate the values of a liberal arts education into a philosophy of life. A large number of them attempt to do both in a problems course which emphasizes the former more than the latter. One's choice in this matter will be conditioned by the level on which the course is given, by its election or requirement, by the kind of student personnel taking the course--liberal arts or otherwise--and especially by the knowledge of whether the course will be a beginning or a terminus for the student.

The content of the introductory courses includes the writings of twenty-eight philosophers. The trend here is definitely away from the interpretative histories of philosophy so much in use twenty years ago, and is definitely toward an almost exclusive use of the original writings of the philosophers. Many are using no textbooks at all. The content of these original writings is organized around a number of problems or questions which in turn follow a psychological rather than a logical or chronological sequence.

In introduction the specific method of teaching which seems to produce the best results and which accounts for the large numbers of students taking the course as an elective is the informal lecture-discussion approach with a decided emphasis on the discussion. This calls for the skillful handling of a discussion so that the class progresses and so that every one in the class has some part in the discussion. The amount of discussion seems to vary with the size of the class.

As might be expected, the same changes in methods of teaching which were used in introduction are also found in the teaching of ethics. A large majority of those teaching ethics

1. The results of this survey are in direct opposition to the inferences of the President's Commission on Higher Education that the emphasis on research as a requirement for the Ph.D. produces researchers rather than great teachers. This survey shows the amazing amount of experimentation and development of new techniques by a profession which has about the highest ratio of Ph.D.'s in the entire teaching profession. It shows further that very few of the special techniques and changes in method of teaching have been developed by those not holding the Ph.D. In other words, the President's Commission is basing some of its conclusions on an educational "old wives' tale" rather than a survey of the actual facts.



use the informal lecture-discussion approach. Very few pure lecture courses are given. On the other hand, there is a tendency to make the approach as much as possible a pure discussion.

The organizations of the content of the course in ethics can be broadly classified as (1) a combination of deductive and inductive; (2) pure deductive; (3) pure inductive; and (4) deductive and inductive with varying degrees of emphasis. If we take deductive to mean a stressing of theory and inductive to mean an emphasis on cases and practical application, the dominant trend at present is a combination of traditional theory with cases and practical application. The second largest group, however, was that reporting an emphasis on pure theory. The third largest group emphasized cases, deriving an hierarchy of values and of conduct from the cases. Other organizations were those which emphasized traditional theory and values, and those using traditional theory with an emphasis on one system. Some stressed personal or social ethics while others stressed professional and vocational ethics. A few presented four or five traditional systems and then directed the students in the formation of an eclecticism of the good points of each system.

In the teaching of historical courses we find that the philosophers have made the same changes in the general method of teaching that they made in introduction and ethics. In other words, the formal lecture-text-quiz-final method of twenty years ago is practically a thing of the past as only two of our contributors list this method and one of these says that he is dissatisfied with it. However, the other extreme, i.e. pure discussion of the readings which is gaining in its extent of use in introduction, is not used very much more than the pure lecture in historical courses. The large majority use the informal lecture-discussion-reading-plus text method. The words "plus text" are used because the readings and not the text are stressed. The text is used merely as a unifying agent or a kind of study-help.

In the report of historical courses, the second largest group was made up of those whose methods form a kind of transition from the old lecture-textbook method to the informal lecture-discussion-readings method. This transitional group uses the lecture (formal or informal)-text-readings approach. These do not permit much discussion in their classes.

The similarities in the changes of the method of teaching historical or upper level courses and the lower level courses is striking, because traditionally these courses were taught by different men. Logic, introduction, and ethics were usually taught by the younger men in the department and historical and others were taught by the older men. Normally we would expect more experimentation on the part of the younger men and less on the part of the others. Our survey shows, however, that those who teach historical courses have experimented just about as much as the others, not only in the general methods of presenting the subject, but also in the development of special techniques. This is perhaps due to the fact that many progressive departments insist that the older men teach at least one course on the lower level and the younger men teach at least one upper level course. This is possible because most of the younger men in philosophy have the Ph.D.

There is, however, a striking difference between the attitude toward textbooks used in historical courses and the attitude toward those used in introduction and ethics. In ethics, logic, and introduction there was much dissatisfaction with the textbooks. A few used texts and added protests, many used their own syllabi, and others used no texts at all. But in historical courses practically every contributor used a text with no protest added. Most of them used the one written by B.A.G. Fuller.

Another striking difference occurs in the organization of content. All but seven used a chronological organization in historical courses whereas a large majority of both those who answered the long questionnaire as well as those who answered the cards preferred a problem organization for the content of introduction and ethics.

There were a number of contributions on aesthetics, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and other courses, but they have not as yet been studied.

The curriculum questions raised on the card survey were answered in the following way: Most of the contributors preferred introduction as the required course and specified that it should be taught as a "problems" course. With a few exceptions the preference was either introduction or logic. The ratio was about two for a "problems" introduction course to one



for logic. The vote was more evenly divided for the beginning course, with introduction receiving a majority of the preferences. However, those who thought that logic should be the required course also thought that it should be the beginning course. This was not the case with those who made other choices. Some felt that there should be no required courses in philosophy.

### Practical Problems

The first division of the section dealing with practical problems was that which treated class preparation. Class preparation can be divided into three phases: (1) preparation for the professor's own personal use which involves his knowledge of the subject, the selection of textbooks, and the special methods and techniques he intends to use in the course; (2) preparation for the student which may necessitate the making of outlines of the course, directions for the use of the library, and methods of giving assignments; and (3) preparation for others more often than not requires the making of a syllabus which is used primarily to show the members of the faculty or the administration or both exactly what will be contained in the course. As the syllabus is also used by many for class-room work, a question on this phase of class preparation was placed in the survey.

The survey revealed that over a third of the contributors were categorically opposed to the use of syllabi for actual classroom teaching. Perhaps many feel like Dommeyer of St. Lawrence University who says, "Never bother with the damned things." About a sixth feel that the syllabus is valuable provided it has some qualification such as "if it is not too long"; "if it is used in an advanced course"; "if it is used in place of a text."

With regard to outlines about one-third said, "No." One-third said, "Yes." And one-third use outlines with certain modifications. Hence about two-thirds of our contributors prefer the use of some sort of outline

Closely connected with the use of outlines is the method of making assignments. Over half prefer flexible day to day or weekly assignments; about a fourth hand out to the class at the beginning of the semester an assignment sheet with exact dates of quizzes and lesson assignments. The other fourth is divided into groups which make their assignments bi-weekly, by chapters in the text, monthly, by topics, three times a semester, and general.

The second phase of class preparation which specifically involves the student is the problem of making the student use the library. On the whole our contributors have two solutions for this problem. By far the larger group are those who feel that required library assignments are the best way to be sure that the student uses the library. These must be supplemented with extensive reserve shelves in the library and oral or written reports on what has been read. The other group feels that student interests and initiative should be followed rather than professorial assignments.

The only part of the third phase of class preparation which concerns us here is the selection of textbooks. The criteria for this selection are the following: first, readability, i.e. by the student; second, suitability, i.e. does it meet the objectives of the course; third, clarity of organization; fourth, accuracy and authoritativeness; and the fifth might be called practicality, or the experience others have had with the text. The best advice on this point is to try it out for a semester.

In student-professor relationships most feel that the professor should be neither purely professional nor non-professional, but should adopt a kind of informal semi-professional attitude which should have an over-all quality of naturalness about it. Practically all feel that the professor should not coach his own students. All of them have conferences ranging from fifteen minutes to two hours. A few require these conferences. Practically all have office hours. About three-fourths of them feel that that professor should make known his own bias to the class. Some of them felt that this should be done on the upper level, but not on the lower level.

With regard to the problem of grading, about three-fourths are opposed to the use of the curve in any class and a little less than a fourth are in favor of using the curve for large lower level classes. On the other hand, only about a third are in favor of using the set standard. Hence most of them use modifications of the set standard.



Sixty seems to be the most satisfactory passing grade, with seventy running a close second. The grade distributions seem to follow the bell curve on the lower level. On the upper level there is a tendency to give 50% A's and B's.

In testing, over three-fourths are against the use of true and false tests. A few favor true and false tests for factual matters in historical courses and in some parts of logic. A majority are opposed to multiple choice tests, but forty to forty-five percent favor them. The distribution of answers for completion tests was about the same as that for true and false tests. All of them favored the use of essay tests.

Most of the contributors were opposed to standard tests and self-rating scales. About sixty percent were opposed to student-rating scales, i.e. the rating of the professors by the students, but the other forty percent were strongly in favor of them.

As far as class attendance is concerned, about two-thirds are opposed to compulsory attendance. The third favoring compulsory attendance gave a wide variety of penalties, the largest group favoring lowered grades for such infractions.

With regard to outside activities, most of them were in favor of having philosophy clubs, discussion groups, and speakers; although there was some opposition to the philosophy club and one or two "no's" for the speakers.

In considering some of the touchy problems of professional ethics there was a variety of answers to the problem of student criticism of colleagues. Most of them, however, said that one should listen to but not encourage such criticism. Thirteen of them "deplore and forbid it." The visiting of classes is to be done only on invitation, say about sixty percent of the contributors. About twenty-five percent are in favor of general visitation and about fifteen percent are definitely opposed to it. About three-fourths feel that a colleague's ability to teach is one's business. About an eighth say it is not and another eighth feel that it is provided one is an administrator. Most of them get their information on a colleague's ability to teach from student conversations. The next largest group gets it from conversations with the instructor, a smaller group gets it from visiting his classes, and the smallest group gets it from a combination of these three.

Criticism of the administration is ruled out altogether by about a fourth of our philosophers. All but six rule it out in classes. These feel that the administration should be criticized both inside and outside of classes. The rest say that objective, constructive criticism outside of classes is good for the school.

The advice of practically all to a person who feels that he has been given a "raw deal" by his department head is to appeal to the administration. In the case in which a colleague has been wronged either by the administration or by another colleague most of our men feel that one should defend him to the limit. The others say the same thing, but define limit in terms of the principles involved, the proprieties of the case, the amount of good that can be done, and possibilities of further damage to the colleague or the institution. A few feel that one should at least go on record in support of him.

The use of time by most of our philosophers can be allocated in the following way: forty hours for the teaching of twelve hours of classes; ten hours for research; and five hours for administrative and committee work.

As far as advancement is concerned, about 98% of our contributors felt that it should be based primarily on teaching ability and publications with teaching ability being the more important factor of the two. A majority felt that membership in professional societies was a factor, but a very minor one. Offers from other places as a criterion were opposed and favored in a ratio of 4 to 3. Personality was felt to be an important factor by practically all. Family responsibilities, i.e. wife and children, as a factor in advancement was opposed by the majority. But surprisingly enough, a large number favored them as a factor and still another group said that they should be a factor in salary but not in rank.

The advice of the profession seems to be to keep moving until one finds what he wants. However, he should not sit and wait, but work and watch!



All of the men except one, said that women should be advanced on an equality with men. The women who were teaching at large woman's colleges said that this was no problem. But the two women from state co-educational schools said that advancement for women was very, very difficult.

In general one might say that the philosophers consider the practical problems just as seriously as they do the technical problems of teaching, and their contributors in the field are of value to anyone in the teaching profession.

The speaker would like to conclude this very incomplete report on an amazing amount of experimentation, which applies in most cases to all subjects and to the entire profession of teaching on the higher educational level, with the observation that as philosophers assume their rightful place in educational leadership on the higher level, philosophy will rise and maintain its importance in every curriculum designed to promote the sciences and the arts.



## THE PRESENT SITUATION IN TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTLOOK

Lewis W. Beck

University of Rochester

The Committee on Information Service of the American Philosophical Association was organized in 1946 and began functioning in 1947. But it was not a new venture; during the depression years Professor H. B. Smith of the University of Pennsylvania had attempted to establish such a clearing-house for jobs and candidates, and several years before this Committee was appointed the Western Division, through its Committee on the Role of Philosophy in Higher Education, had established such a service, directed by Dean Gamertsfelder at Ohio University. It was felt by everyone that inasmuch as there was a nationwide shortage of teachers of philosophy, such an organization should be conducted by the Association as a whole.

In the summer of 1946, Mrs. Gilbert, who was then president of the Eastern Division, appointed me to membership in the committee, and later the Western Division named Dean Leys, and the Pacific Division, Professor Marhenke. I regret that we have never been able to have a meeting of the full committee, but the Eastern and Western Divisions' members have met occasionally, and have had the advice and counsel of Professor Marhenke by mail. Throughout our work we have had the benefit of the advice of Dean Gamertsfelder. In 1949 Professor Hahn was appointed to replace Dean Leys.

During the first year our work was on a somewhat experimental basis, and we learned a number of mistakes to avoid. We learned, for instance, that a general form, such as many of you have filled out, is not adequate as an application for a specific position. At the beginning of that year we did not know this, and we had the application forms photostated to send to the colleges. Though the forms which were sent were in every case carefully selected with respect to what the appointing officers said they wanted, that year most of the jobs went to persons who had applied on their own and could show their specific and sometimes intangible qualifications for the specific job. So in 1947, when we knew of 81 likely openings in philosophy, only 14 candidates got positions through the committee.

Hence during the following year we changed our approach; instead of providing information on candidates to appointing officers, we sent information on openings to possible candidates. In this way we let each candidate make the best impression he could, and it put the committee candidates on an equal footing with those who had other sources of information about openings. As a consequence the committee saved money and had better results: out of 90 appointments of which we were notified, 29 went to people on our lists.

During the current year we have continued this policy, but with less good results. We were notified of 57 openings, the smallest in three years, and had 24 candidates, the largest in three years; and we placed only seven persons. The committee can not be blamed for this drop; the cause lies rather in a general change in the employment picture, together with certain limitations in effectiveness inherent in any such organization as this committee.

First as to the general situation. Until this year, college faculties were expanding; during 1949-50 there is general retrenchment, with nearly 17% of the schools operating in the red, 1.4% facing bankruptcy, and 12% having to decrease the size of the faculty.<sup>2</sup> Enrollments are down almost everywhere. Departments of philosophy, always small, have suffered disproportionately, in my opinion, though I have no statistics to show this.

1. New York Times, October 2, 1949.



At any rate, the enrollment in philosophy classes has not declined as rapidly as was feared, but few new positions have been created. The consequence is that philosophy departments seem generally to be understaffed, but with the financial recession preventing any enlargement. The enthusiasm for general education in technical schools, which promised the opening of many schools to teachers of philosophy, seems to have died down among the hard-pressed administrations.

The other side of the picture is that there are now many more new Ph.D.'s coming out of the graduate schools. I do not think the picture is bright for them. Though beginning salaries are better than they have ever been, there are simply fewer of them.

In this discouraging prospect, the question is: what can we do about it? Or, more specifically, can the committee do anything about it? I am personally not very hopeful; I think last year, when we helped place 29 people, was far less typical than this year when we have placed only seven. I wish to suggest ways in which the committee may be of more help to you as either appointing officers or potential candidates for new positions.

First, the candidate lists should be strengthened. The faculties of some of the largest universities, with their own employment services, apparently do not mention the committee to their graduate students. The result is that our candidate list, especially on the instructor and assistant professor level, is not representative. If we are asked, as we often are, for a man just getting his Ph.D. from Harvard, Cornell, or Princeton, for instance, we have to reply that these men are not listed with us. So I ask directors of graduate programs to co-operate with us, even though they may continue to place chief reliance on their university placement services.

Second, there is the candidate who is well-placed but may be looking for something better--or maybe just looking. Our files are cluttered with applications of people who do not want jobs, merely information about jobs or offers of jobs. This is costly and time consuming, since we cannot spot such people and put them in a separate file. Let me remind you that in the three years we have been at work, only two or three "first class professorships" have been filled through the aid of this committee; our greatest activity is on the instructor and assistant professor level and, generally, in the smaller schools where the appointments are made by men outside the philosophy departments whose informal contacts with other philosophers are very restricted.

Third, there is the merely "hypothetical opening." Out of the 57 requests for candidates that we received this year, it now appears that only about half the appointments were actually made. I appreciate the interest that appointing officers have in "looking over the field." But if they would delay writing to us until the appointment is almost certain, they would save the committee from a great deal of useless work and many deserving individuals from disappointments.

I believe, therefore, that if we can get a somewhat smaller list of bona fide candidates, with a greater percentage of young Ph.D.'s from the best graduate schools, and a smaller list of bona fide openings, the committee can still be of real service to all of you in bringing the right job and the right man together.



THE FUNCTION OF AN ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY

John A. Irving

Victoria College, University of Toronto

To conclude as successful and stimulating a conference as this with an address on the function of a conference on the teaching of philosophy is like carrying coals to Newcastle. As president of the Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy from 1941 to 1945, and as one who is therefore familiar with the numerous and complex problems that must have arisen in connection with the planning of this large Cleveland meeting, I should like first of all to offer my enthusiastic congratulations to Professor Frederick P. Harris and his committee for the thought and effort they have devoted to its organization.

During a discussion with Dr. Harris last April at the meeting of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association in Ohio State University, he suggested to me that, if such a gathering as this could be arranged, an account of the fourteen years' experience of the Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy would be a valuable guide in determining future policy. Having accepted his invitation, I should, perhaps, make it clear at the beginning that I have a definite purpose in mind: I hope, as I am sure you all do, that some kind of permanent organization will arise from our present conference, and that this new organization will be closely linked with the Western Division.

In recent years various attempts have been made to deal with certain practical problems with which philosophers as a professional group are confronted. Three such efforts, already familiar to most of you, may be mentioned. (1) In 1938 the Western Division set up a Committee on the Role of Philosophy in Higher Education. Mr. Walker H. Hill's Report to Teachers of Philosophy<sup>1</sup> gives an interesting account of the work of this committee, and its important Subcommittee on the Teaching of Philosophy which was organized in 1941. The subcommittee undertook three tasks: (a) the investigation of professional opportunities and vacancies in philosophy, (b) the provision of a placement service for philosophy departments and persons seeking philosophical positions, and (c) the study of the function of philosophy in college and university curricula. (2) A national Committee on Information Service with respect to positions available in philosophy has been functioning for a number of years. Its chairman, Professor Lewis W. Beck, informed us last night in his report on its activities that much more cooperation than has hitherto existed is necessary if this committee is to function successfully in the future. (3) The Commission on the Function of Philosophy in Liberal Education represents the most comprehensive attempt yet made in this country to deal constructively with our problems as a professional group. Its report, Philosophy in American Education, should be required reading for our graduate students.

In addition to the three enterprises I have just mentioned there have been various occasions (such as the Stanford Conference on the Humanities) and symposia at which our problems as teachers have been discussed. Several papers, stimulated by these discussions, have been published, notably by such men as Professors C. W. Hendel, C. J. Ducasse, and Max Black. These numerous and varied activities all point to the need of an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy to co-ordinate, consolidate, and enlarge the excellent work that has already been begun.

The Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy, to which I now direct your attention, was an outgrowth of still earlier discussions and efforts than those I have just outlined. In 1933 the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association recommended that its Executive should cooperate with the Western and Pacific Divisions in the formation of a national committee to study the general problem of increasing the opportunities for employ-

1. The Journal of Philosophy, XL (April 15, 1943), 214-220.



ment of men and women trained in philosophy. During the following years the activities of this Committee on Employment, as it came to be called, were directed mainly to the extension of the teaching of philosophy into institutions where it was not then being taught. To promote this objective, a group of some twenty persons, some of whom were professors of philosophy, others outstanding university presidents, and still others men of national prominence whose interests had led them in the direction of philosophy, were invited to participate in a symposium on the Place and Importance of Philosophy in Education. Subject to the approval of the three Divisions, and of the Board of Officers, it was proposed that the results of this symposium should be published in pamphlet form and distributed among schools and colleges throughout the country. Although contributions to the symposium were subsequently received from seventeen persons, and financial support was voted by all three Divisions, the Board of Officers withheld its approval and the symposium was apparently never published.

More positive action was taken elsewhere. Reporting to the Pacific Division in 1934 on the Activities of the Committee on Employment, Dr. Elmo A. Robinson, of San Jose State College, recommended a conference on the value and teaching of philosophy. This recommendation was accepted, and such a conference was held at Stanford University in December, 1935. The following year Dr. Robinson reported to the Pacific Division the organization of the Pacific Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy; and it was arranged that thereafter the meetings of the latter should be held in conjunction with the annual meetings of the former. Since the organization of the Pacific Conference at Mills College on December 27, 1936, meetings have been held each year in connection with the sessions of the Pacific Division.

During the fourteen years of its existence the programmes of the Conference have taken a great variety of forms, and there has been much experimentation. Among the many topics that have been presented in papers and discussions are: the place of philosophy in the Junior College; the articulation of philosophy in the Junior Colleges and the University; the content of the first year course; methods of teaching the history of philosophy, logic, ethics, and aesthetics; the relationship between philosophy and science; the use of objective tests in philosophy courses; the role of philosophy in general education.

The extent of the pre-war activities of the Pacific Conference may be illustrated by a consideration of the programme presented at its University of Washington meeting in 1939, which was held in collaboration with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture. An afternoon session was devoted to four papers on the teaching of social philosophy and the relation between social philosophy and the social sciences. In the evening there was a general discussion of the place of philosophy in college curricula which was led by a university dean, a psychologist, a political scientist, and an historian. At the third session, on the following morning, there were three remarkable addresses, by a representative from Washington and two outstanding philosophers, on the work of the Division of Program Study and Discussion of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture, in its relation to the teaching of philosophy in colleges and universities. The Conference closed with a joint luncheon with the Pacific Division at which the late H. G. Townsend reviewed the history of philosophical organizations in the United States. I remember that he concluded his address with the remark that the constructive Pacific Conference had a precedent in the old negative discussions of what's wrong with philosophy!

The affiliation of the Conference with the Pacific Division has been beneficial to both organizations. The meetings of the Conference, which are held immediately before those of the Division, have varied in length from an evening or half a day to a full day with three sessions. Since the war its programmes have been more concentrated than previously, being limited to one session devoted to a single topic. An overlapping membership has made it possible frequently to conclude the meetings of the Conference and open those of the Division with a joint luncheon or dinner, at which an address is given by some outstanding personality such as Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn or Professor Hans Reichenbach.

Over the years the Conference has served in a very remarkable manner as a medium where people from the Junior Colleges, the State Colleges, and the large Universities have freely intermingled and exchanged ideas concerning common problems. Representatives of the Junior Colleges on the programmes have included Professors Linn W. Hattersly, W. Hardin Hughes, and Orvil F. Myers; of the State Colleges, Professors Elmo A. Robinson, Harry



Ruja, and Dean P. F. Valentine; of the large Universities, Professors G. P. Adams, Harold Chapman Brown, Alburey Castell, B. A. G. Fuller, Heinrich Gomperz, D. S. MacKay, Stephen C. Pepper, Donald A. Piatt, Melvin Rader, James Hayden Tufts, and William Savery. This impressive list indicates clearly that many of the outstanding philosophers on the Coast have participated in the activities of the Conference. But the speakers have not been restricted to professional philosophers. Educational administrators such as Deans E. R. Guthrie and Frederick Padelford, and Dr. Aubrey A. Douglass, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California, have taken part; as have also leaders in fields related to philosophy such as Professors Thomas I. Cook and Giovanni Costigan. The most enthusiastic member of the Pacific Conference is undoubtedly its principal founder, Professor Elmo A. Robinson of San Jose State College, California, who first aroused my interest in the Conference, and to whom I am greatly indebted for information regarding its development, and the problems with which it has been confronted, during the post-war years.

Having sketched the history and mechanics of the Pacific Conference, there remains the much more difficult task of assessing some of the values that have accrued to its members during the past fourteen years.

(1) The Conference has served as a medium for the interchange of information with respect to educational programmes and for the discussion of the place of philosophy in such programmes. This function was vividly illustrated at our present Conference yesterday morning by the papers of Professors Earl Edgar, Louis K. Zerby, and Troy Organ which described the new tendencies at Kansas and Michigan State Colleges and at the Pennsylvania College for Women.

(2) The Conference has presented new and challenging ideas to department heads, as well as to deans and presidents, regarding curriculum changes and the content of courses. That this function has already been realized by this Cleveland Conference is attested by a statement which a new department head made to me at the close of this morning's seminar discussions on the teaching of Logic and Scientific Method: "This Conference has been ideal for me, as I am confronted with the problem of curriculum changes--in fact, with a general overhauling of our curriculum. These discussions couldn't have come at a more opportune time. We are considering especially changes in our introductory courses and possible changes in the level of our offerings--whether they should be freshman or sophomore courses. We are also wondering about the possible addition of an introductory course considerably different from the one we have now." He added that the papers and discussions yesterday and today had been exceptionally helpful in stimulating him to think freshly and vigorously about his administrative problems.

(3) The Conference has enabled those professors who are concerned with the training of graduate students to appreciate the needs of the Junior, State, and smaller Colleges as regards personnel. Conditions are changing so rapidly that it is often difficult for philosophers in the large universities to form an adequate impression of what is expected of the young Ph.D.'s whom they are turning out. In this connection may I suggest that it is inadvisable to arrange seminar discussion groups according to the size of Colleges, as has been done at this Cleveland Conference? Representatives from the larger institutions should have every opportunity of carrying on discussions with those from the smaller colleges.

(4) The Conference has constantly encouraged the attendance of college administrators, as well as of people from fields other than philosophy. As I have already pointed out, at the University of Washington Conference in 1939, deans, psychologists, historians, and political scientists discussed with philosophers the place of philosophy in college curricula; and at the Stanford Conference the following year deans and presidents contributed to a round table discussion on "what philosophy has to offer its students". It is surely unnecessary to stress the importance of recurring, frank, and full discussions between professional philosophers and college administrators concerning the place of philosophy in a liberal education.

(5) The Conference has been unique in bringing together those who teach philosophy in the universities and those who teach it in the Junior Colleges. The work of the latter group has usually been of such a nature that they would otherwise have had no contact with the members of the Pacific Division. Dr. Elmo Robinson has recently informed me that there is a growing realization on the Coast that the Pacific Conference has fulfilled a real and enduring service in this connection. I have been told that a considerable number of people who have



never attended a meeting of the Western Division are present here. Provision for an intermingling of personnel from the Junior Colleges and the Universities should be incorporated into any organization that may emerge from this Cleveland Conference.

(6) Both at meetings of the Pacific Conference and at this Conference I have heard numerous comments from the most unexpected sources--"high and dry" professional philosophers--that the papers have been more relevant, more to the point, than many of those presented at the Divisional meetings. This point is, of course, debatable; but the existence of such comments does suggest that there is a need, widely felt, for discussions of a type not offered at the Divisional meetings.

(7) The main value of the Pacific Conference has, of course, accrued from its constant concern with the development of more adequate methods of teaching philosophy. In his brilliant address last night--an address which, to all who heard it, will forever remain unforgettable, unforgotten--Professor Brand Blanshard gave us a series of vignettes of some of the greatest European and American philosophical teachers of the last three generations. One received the impression that these men were so pre-eminent that they would have derived no benefit from an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy--although would not Mr. Blanshard admit, albeit somewhat reluctantly, that the teaching methods of one of his greatest masters, the late H. H. Joachim, could have been improved to the advantage even of the students of Oxford? In any event, teachers of the type Mr. Blanshard has described are as rare as they are excellent. The rank and file of philosophers are not so Olympian, nor so impenetrable, that they cannot benefit from instruction in, and discussion of, the fine art of teaching. Nor are the strongly formed (and frequently bad) habits of years of teaching too formidable to be overcome by discussions such as have taken place at the Pacific Conference. I can myself testify to the improvement in my methods of teaching the history of philosophy which resulted from a lengthy discussion in 1938, led by such great teachers of this branch as Professors B. A. G. Fuller, D. S. MacKay, and Donald Piatt, at the University of California meeting of the Conference.

Methods of teaching, the contents of courses, and the arrangement of curricula, some of you will very correctly tell me, are not everything. And you will be right--for machinery and techniques are no substitutes for great personalities. The recruiting of such personalities for philosophy will always remain one of our greatest problems. In a penetrating article on "The Place of Philosophy in Postwar Education,"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ordway Tead has commented: "With respect to teachers of philosophy, we surely have to discover more men and women with a synthesizing capacity, with a passion for truth-seeking, with skill in being vivid generalizers, with an alert awareness of the big problems of life. We want teachers who are philosophers and not merely students of philosophical writings. The former is a high calling for which the demand may well exceed the supply. The latter are too likely to be specialists who know more and more about less and less."

Such statements might seem to suggest that without the presence of great teachers of philosophy, an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy would be only indifferently successful in the achievement of its objectives. Dr. Tead points out, however, that the actual value of philosophy to students depends upon how it is taught. "The fact that the subject has recently been not too popular surely gives some support to the view that how it is taught may well be reconsidered." To keep alive the issue of how philosophy is taught is surely a supreme function of an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy.

Participants in the Pacific Conference have been aware for at least a dozen years that the educational structure of the United States is changing rapidly. Before the war there were in California alone over seventy Junior Colleges, and I used to hear it said on the Coast that within twenty-five years millions of students throughout the nation would be enrolled in institutions of this type. The Pacific Conference has already made important contributions to the solution of the problem of presenting philosophy effectively at the Junior College level, a problem with which Dr. Tead is also greatly concerned: "We will, finally, be unaware of the full proportions of our problem in the next generation if we do not realize that numerically the junior college will be the ascendant phenomenon with a total student body approaching half a million students in the immediate future. Are we thinking constructively about how

1. *School and Society*, LIX (June 10, 1944) 401-405.



this subject can be effectively presented in a two-year college? Are we concerned to foster the beginnings of philosophical interest and awareness among those at this level? Here is an essential but unfaced problem." Owing to the existence of the Pacific Conference, this problem, I need hardly add, has received frequent and vigorous consideration on the Coast.

In spite of the difficulties connected with the effective presentation of our subject to students at all levels of instruction, I share Dr. Tead's eloquent optimism concerning the future of philosophy as the leading factor in a liberal education: "Philosophy can again be the keystone in the arch of liberal instruction. Its functional significance in a democracy is great. It can arouse and direct curiosity. It can aid young people to a balancing of tentativeness and conviction. It can help to enrich their sense of values, personal and social, and to supply standards of judgment and taste to aid in appraising values throughout life. It may not do these things. But it can do them if the teaching of philosophy is revived." To revivify the teaching of philosophy is the principal function of an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy.

It is interesting that up to the present time each of the three divisions of the American Philosophical Association has dealt with the problems of teaching philosophy in a different way. There can be no doubt that the Pacific Conference represents the most constructive and long continued effort that has yet been made in this country to solve those problems--I except, of course, from consideration here the Commission on the Function of Philosophy in Liberal Education, to whose magnificent contribution I have previously referred. It would, however, be a disservice to the Pacific Conference if I did not mention certain difficulties with which it has been confronted. (1) It has been faced with the problem of continuing membership. (2) Its finances have always been more or less precarious, as its officers have felt that they had no real reason for asking for more than nominal membership dues. (3) It has not developed a system of publication, although fairly comprehensive accounts of its meetings have frequently appeared in School and Society. (4) Its programmes have not been linked up with discussions that have been going on, more or less sporadically, in the Western and Eastern Divisions during the past fifteen years.

In the light of these and other difficulties with which the Pacific Conference has been faced I should like to raise several questions. (1) To deal with the problems connected with the teaching of philosophy, should we develop a new and separate national organization with three divisions? Or, (2) Should the project be taken over by the American Philosophical Association and be put on a permanent basis as an integral part of its work? (3) Should there be a vehicle for publication (which need not necessarily mean a new journal)?

In conclusion, I should like to focus your attention on the question: Are you going to use this splendid Cleveland Conference as an occasion for setting up a Western Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy? The fact that the Pacific Conference has persisted through the trying years of the war and post-war periods must surely indicate that it has met an important need not met otherwise by the Pacific Division. In the light of my own experience on the Coast, I believe that the function of an annual conference on the teaching of philosophy is supplementary to the function of the regular Divisional meetings. May I therefore say again, as I said at the beginning, that I hope very much that this Cleveland Conference will take the lead in bringing together into some kind of permanent and comprehensive organization the various expressions of interest in the problems of teaching philosophy that have been developing in the Western Division during the past fifteen years? If you want to perpetuate the teaching of philosophy, you ought to perpetuate this Conference on the Teaching of Philosophy!



# LEARNING TO PHILOSOPHIZE

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## I

"Man soll nicht nur die Philosophie, sondern auch das Philosophieren lernen." This familiar dictum indicates that the task of the philosophy teacher, which most of us would, I believe, approve, is to make such use of already existing philosophy as will insure that the student himself begins to philosophize. If philosophy may be defined at its minimum as a critical analysis of key terms in human experience and a search for principles of explanation for problems of meaning and value that arise within it, the task of the teacher is to show how the student may effectively carry forward this enterprise. It avails little for him to learn that others have done this if he cannot do it himself.

Turning to the philosopher's almanac, Philosophy in American Education,<sup>1</sup> we learn that Introduction to Philosophy should be a course in which the chief questions should be treated which are vital to the strategy of one's life and basic to human interests, viz., religion, science, education, art, morality, social policy. Let our discussion be directed toward introduction to the whole field of philosophy so far as that may be possible in one semester, and not to some phase of it, as John Wild<sup>2</sup> and the California Associates conceive introduction.<sup>3</sup> The term may, however, cover introduction to the field of philosophy with an attempt to solve basic problems from a particular point of view, as Brightman,<sup>4</sup> Edel,<sup>5</sup> Pap,<sup>6</sup> and Boyer<sup>7</sup> have done.

However students may be introduced to philosophy--whether by perusal of an integrated system of philosophy which tries to take the chief problems into account, or by exploration of the current batch of problems that press for solution, or by development of principles of thought that will serve for treatment of any problems that may arise, or by study of typical philosophers of the past--there are certain principles which may guide the introductory venture.

## II

Some of these principles are negative in bearing and suggest what an introductory course in philosophy should avoid. First, it should not put a premium on the memorizing of terms and systems of thought merely. Passive acceptance of fact, or theory as if proved, has been the typical habit of the student before he begins philosophy. To allow him to remain a spectator while the teacher philosophizes risks the almost inevitable conclusion that he will make good if he can only remember how the professor does it. To offer him a completed system of philosophy permits him to gape either in open-mouthed admiration or languid boredom. A study program of problems for written solution as he studies, and which are called for frequently by the professor, will promote an active participation in the learning process.

A second hazard to avoid is confirmation of prejudice. The student comes already disposed toward and perhaps steeped in, naturalism, religious faith, agnosticism, aestheticism, or some other ism or combination of isms. He must learn not how to shore up a teetering belief, or how to eviscerate all competitors of his beliefs, but how to examine the range of every belief, whether his own or others, and test it for validity.

1. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945, p. 206.
2. Introduction to Realistic Philosophy. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948.
3. Knowledge and Society. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938.
4. An Introduction to Philosophy. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925.
5. The Theory and Practice of Philosophy. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946.
6. Elements of Analytic Philosophy. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.
7. Highways of Philosophy. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949.



But third, undue deflation of the student's ego is equally fatal to the philosophic enterprise. When he finds that none of his convictions will hold up, he may give up in angry frustration. A boxing match between an utter amateur and an old pro is most unfair if the pro cares more about winning than transmitting his knowhow to the amateur.

Again, the student must not be permitted to conclude that one answer is as good as another. He must learn that differing answers often have much in common, and that truth takes on differing forms. But where answers are at definite odds with each other, the student must be forced, if necessary, from the very beginning of the semester to take one. He must be hounded day in and day out with the question, "What do you think?" about the major option under consideration. Philosophy will not be clear to him, and it will not seem to matter much, if he is allowed to waltz on every basic issue.

Some positive precepts may now well stand before us. In the first place, introduction to philosophy should be at least attended, if not pervaded, by the play-spirit. High good humor should spring from the imaginative probing of possibilities for understanding. Morris Cohen delighted in pointing out that "there never was a man who made a great discovery in the realm of ideas who did not keenly enjoy the play of ideas for its own sake."<sup>1</sup> The good pedagogue in philosophy, as in other subjects, goes forth to his task "as to a sport," in Charles Lamb's phrase.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, let the study of philosophy exude a sense of immediacy. The student's conceptions may extend to large spans of time, and he may go about forming them with a merry temper, but he must not delay in beginning. Orientation in time, a sense for the historic import of each mental decision, must be brought home to him. He must be brought to realize that he is daily making up the quality of his life in a large measure by the manner of his thought. The student must be led to see that almost a third of his life is gone already and that he has done little to make it self-directing.

Third, let the beginning course in philosophy be frequently controversial. The human mind generally resists treatment. Prejudice is often deep and its defenders can only be blasted from their breast-works by a sharp disagreement or even a sarcastic snort. Milton's admiration for the man in "Samson Agonistes" who was "calm of mind, all passion spent," is no recommendation for the teacher of philosophy.

Finally, let the beginning, as well as ending, of study in philosophy be communicative. The student must not only be prohibited but prevented from keeping his thought to himself. Minds grow as they establish channels of communication with others of their kind. Thoughts develop as they are given away orally and in writing. The midwifery of Socrates was the establishment of communication between the islands of experience in his pupils. Perhaps "the truly elite" are those who have articulated their experience and willed to communicate their gleams of meaning in things to others.<sup>3</sup>

### III

Among the ways of introducing students to philosophy, I have been invited to consider especially the historical method. Since this method is not a systematic history of philosophy, it must be highly selective of materials because of the limited time usually allotted to the course and the variety of problems typical of the field of philosophy. Selection of source materials is a serious problem. Original works are usually too long to be read in their entirety if a sufficient number of different problems is to be examined during the course. If a large number of short selections is read, the student is called upon to plunge into a section of thought without knowing the context.

1. Reason and Nature, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, p. 400.

2. "The Old and the New Schoolmaster," in The Essays of Elia (Ed. H.E. Woodbridge). New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928, p. 79.

3. Cf. Irwin Edman, "The Elite Among Us," The Saturday Review of Literature, (Sept. 10, 1949), Vol. 32, No. 37 p. 42.



Typical efforts at selection may be found in Landmarks for Beginners in Philosophy by Edman and Schneider,<sup>1</sup> Basic Problems of Philosophy by Bronstein, Krikorian, and Wiener,<sup>2</sup> Preface to Philosophy: Book of Readings by Moople, Piper and Tolley,<sup>3</sup> and Understandings the World by Schoen, Schrickel, and Ames.<sup>4</sup> All but the last volume are anthologies, whereas the last is a compilation of historical interpretations by the authors classed under three types of problems, i.e. the World as Known, the World as Shared, and the World as Enjoyed, with the treatments arranged chronologically in each case. The Book of Readings presupposes study of the text book by Hocking and others entitled A Preface to Philosophy,<sup>5</sup> while the others contain brief introductions to the selections. The latter are long but few in number in Landmarks, and short but numerous in Readings.

Introduction to philosophy through such materials as appear in these volumes has definite merits. First of all, this method assists the student to become acquainted with first class minds. Since the contact with philosophy by the typical student is commonly short, he is entitled to a glimpse of philosophy at its best. Contemporary writers prominent in their time may prove in later perspective to be mediocre. If the student is able to understand the works assigned, he is thrilled by his ability to enter into the thought world of a master mind. This self-confidence in dealing with philosophical questions is foundational to progress in the field.

Second, such study puts a premium on active learning. Classical works in philosophy cannot be read as bed-time stories; they call for upright attention and downright concentration. The trend to make education easy by means of visual aids, field trips, and dramatics, reflects a failure to recognize that after-college problems are not solved so easily. If college study doesn't lead a student to become mentally aggressive he is not likely ever to become so. With the passing of requirements in language and mathematics in many schools, the curriculum frequently becomes a doling out of the mushiest pabulum. If philosophy can add to the integrity of education it does a real service.

In the third place, introduction by way of illustrations from the history of thought has the merit of acquainting the student with the roots of his own, and other, cultures. To study basic conceptions which have been adopted into the warp and woof of contemporary culture has the double advantage of discovering where the tools of human communication came from and also of finding out how to use them now that we have them. Since philosophy has contributed to the scientific, artistic, social, and religious accomplishments of every age, knowledge of great works in philosophy carries with it also some knowledge of generating factors in the cultural accomplishments of those ages.

Finally, this method has the virtue of magnifying the importance of philosophy through demonstration that truth has significance beyond the present moment. Even for pragmatists and operationalists, the insights of other days are instructive. Intelligent conduct involves relevant transactions with current conditions, but such relevancy is proportionate to the number of possible reactions from which one can choose.

On the contrary, approach to philosophy via illustrations from its history has serious handicaps. It can scarcely serve as introduction to the whole field of philosophy in a single semester, since the materials studied are bound to be focused either on a single problem, or on a total system of philosophy. Introduction comes to mean introduction to philosophies, rather than the development of a method of thinking which can be turned on the many phases of human experience.

Naturally, the instructor must try to tie together the types of method which the student studies. But it is difficult, and this may be taken as a second handicap, to show the student what to look for in his study. The brief introductions in Edman and Schneider and Bronstein, Krikorian and Wiener are insufficient to insure an understanding of the material. Many philosophical conceptions of permanent value arose in reaction to earlier views. They cannot be fully appropriated without explanation of what went before. For example, Socratic method, basic to almost any conception of philosophy, developed from the sophistic belief in subjectivism, which in turn was a result of conflict among earlier schemes of thought.

1. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941.

2. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1947.

3. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947.

4. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947.

5. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946.



Furthermore, many ideas are inextricably tied up in a whole system of thought, an apprehension of which is necessary to understand the conception under consideration. As lucid as Plato was, his views on art, or indeed any other subject, are unintelligible apart from his conception of ideas, and much of his thought presupposes his view of the soul. Hegel's views on history, like all the rest of his thought, are closely knit with his metaphysics. Yet philosophy involves some kind of social change, and the student must reckon with Hegel. If the instructor must introduce the student to this material before he studies it and must help him interpret it after he reads it, the instructor is presently teaching history of philosophy.

Third, much of the material usually offered in anthologies of philosophy is too difficult for the beginner who lacks both historical and logical perspective. Professor Wild may be right in saying that we underestimate the ability of students,<sup>1</sup> but no pedagogical method is sound which aims primarily at the highest quality student. We have to take students as we find them, and that means that they are not awake to the charms of philosophy, nor able in many cases to begin to practice it at once. Music students who began to play by study of Bach or Beethoven would be rare indeed if they did not become discouraged. Mathematics students do not begin their studies with calculus, and science students don't start with history of science. In each of these cases, a start is made with simple concepts and elementary exercises. How can philosophy students be expected to do any better?

Again, in the student's mind there is a lurking fear that historical examples are "überwundene Standpunkten." This suggests to him that philosophy is a pleasant pastime, cultural no doubt, but who has time for it? Present day thinkers seem to him the ones to reckon with, regardless of the sources of their ideas. This prejudice can be broken down more easily in an avowed course in history of philosophy where the carry-over can be regularly shown. But in sending a student to historical sources in an introduction course we ask him to transport himself from present thought habits to another time and clime, find out what was said and how it can be translated into current thought. The puzzles of philosophy are trying enough to him without mixing himself up over a past question in order to unmix himself about current questions.

#### IV

It may be concluded that historical perspective must be subsidiary to a systematic study of typical problems in the field of philosophy. Let the basic problems and representative solutions be mastered with such historical orientation as time may allow, but make the point of departure a mastery of elemental issues which equip the student to handle the harder themes.

Any approach to philosophy must put a premium on clarity of terminology. Without reducing philosophy to mere semantics, it still, on any definition, must have good semantic manners. This virtue is more likely to accrue if an orderly inquiry into basic conceptions is followed than if the student is left to encounter them in the specialized setting of a given philosophical system and expected thereafter to figure out the standard meaning of terms. Anchorage of terms in the history of thought is a secondary consideration.

Philosophizing is solving problems, getting answers to questions. The student is philosophizing when he succeeds in grasping and begins to solve such problems as, what is philosophy and its relation and difference from science, religion, art; what is space, time, matter, change, evolution, mechanism; what is mind, consciousness, experience, reason; what is truth and ways of testing for it; what is value, its origin, criteria, and cosmic standing; what are typical metaphysical views, and how can they be tested?

If it be objected that such a statement of problems begs the question of their existence as real and not pseudo-problems, let them be reversed in form and put more broadly, (though I believe more confusingly to the beginner), e.g. is there philosophy as any considerable discipline different from science, religion, art: is there space, time, matter, change, evolution, mechanism, and so on. Such a beginning is farther from home for the neophyte, however, and suggests to him that philosophy is an esoteric world where he is bound not to be sure of anything. But it does make clear at once that philosophy is a search for answers.

1. Op. cit., p. x.



Such a systematic study of problems serves as a basis for further study in philosophy and also for assembling the cabinet of conceptions which will serve the student as his own philosophy.

Collateral reading is profitable in a source book such as Bronstein's along with study of text books such as those offered by Patrick,<sup>1</sup> Mead,<sup>2</sup> Martin,<sup>3</sup> Carnett,<sup>4</sup> Cunningham,<sup>5</sup> or Titus,<sup>5</sup> in addition to the systematic texts mentioned above. In this way the student gets a taste of classical writing in philosophy when he is equipped to profit from it, and without the likelihood of indigestion from too large servings of it....

1. Introduction to Philosophy. (Revised Edition) New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1935.

2. Types and Problems of Philosophy. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1946.

3. The Inquiring Mind. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1947.

4. The Quest for Wisdom. New York: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1942.

5. Problems of Philosophy. (Revised Edition) New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935.

6. Living Issues in Philosophy. New York: American Book Company, 1946.



## INTRODUCTORY PHILOSOPHY: ANALYSIS OR SYNTHESIS?

Harold H. Titus

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There are various ways of beginning a study of philosophy. The way selected by the teacher will undoubtedly reflect his view of the nature and function of philosophy. A student may begin with a history of the subject. There is much to be said for this approach. I am ready to admit that the History of Philosophy is one of the basic courses, if not the basic course, in a philosophy department. Some teachers, however, have what might be called "an obsession with the historical." One teacher is in-print as saying, "Apart from the History of Philosophy I should be inclined to doubt if philosophy has any subject matter of its own at all." I do not agree with this position and am not advocating a history of philosophy as a first course. If it is presented in a thoroughgoing fashion, with the use of original sources, it is difficult for many beginners. Furthermore, the variety of philosophers presented is often confusing and discouraging. Too frequently in the past, and in the minds of teachers and students today, philosophy is a mere history of past philosophizing. One college administrator and counsellor is reported to have said, "Professors of philosophy don't profess philosophy: they profess only to define philosophy and to say what other philosophers have said. If you're looking for a philosophy stay away from philosophy departments; you will find only reporters there." Philosophers must avoid the dangers of excessive ancestor worship and of a cannibalism that leads them to live off the flesh and bones of their mighty dead.

My purpose is to advocate the "Problems Approach" in which the questions considered are living or modern problems. While some of these problems may be new or recent in origin, many of them will be the perennial problems which thinking men at all times must face. They are the problems which are crucial for our thinking and living in today's world. Such an approach will probably include the consideration of such questions as the nature, function, and methods of philosophy; the relation of philosophy to education, science, art, and religion; the nature of man, including the nature of the self and of mind; the nature of knowledge; the principle of valuation; and the problem of freedom and order. The title assigned to me, "Introductory Philosophy: Analysis or Synthesis?" will indicate that this approach may be slanted in the direction of analysis or of synthesis.

### Analysis and Criticism

There are those who claim that the chief function of philosophy is analysis and criticism. Analysis and criticism may be directed in any one of a number of directions. There are those who believe that the function of philosophy is to examine the assumptions, the principles, and the terms and concepts of the special sciences and of everyday living. Certainly this is a part of the task of philosophy. Others see philosophy mainly as logical discipline concerned with the rules and methods of thinking, with the logical structure of sentences, and with precision of meaning and language. Through such analysis some philosophers have gone so far as to suggest that all previous thinkers are wrong and that most problems considered in the past are mere pseudo-problems.

When the method of analysis is applied to modern problems the aim may be mainly to clarify the problem or to deal with some specific and detailed piece of inquiry. As one teacher of philosophy said, "An introductory course in philosophy should not attempt to be comprehensive and inclusive. It should give a dogged analysis of one or at most a few problems and thus lead the student to see philosophy as systematic and thoroughgoing critical analysis."

Now analysis can add much to our knowledge and help us to discover facts and relationships which we would not have discovered otherwise. But analysis is not an end in itself.



When we analyze things into units and parts it is a mistake to believe that the units or parts discovered in the analysis are more real than the totalities with which we begin.

### Synthesis and Integration

My personal view is that while analysis and criticism will be prominent in all philosophical thinking, the primary need today is for synthesis, integration, and a synoptic vision of the problems of our day. We also need convictions as to how these problems may be faced and guidance in the selection of principles by which to live. During the past few generations the direction of knowledge has been toward analysis and specialism so that philosophy too has frequently become a narrow specialty. Philosophy is not just one specialty among many, and certainly not the exclusive preserve of teachers of philosophy. In my opinion a first course in philosophy should be comprehensive and constructive and acquaint students with the attitude, method, and the fundamental problems of philosophy. Philosophy should apply to life. It should prescribe principles by which to live and purposes for which to live. It should furnish a life view and a world view.

My reasons for believing that philosophy should be comprehensive and deal with the living issues of the day are as follows:

In the first place, such an approach is in line with the traditional or historical view of the nature and function of philosophy. The great philosophers of the West have thought and written about the problems of human relations. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Locke, Hume, Bentham, and Mill are just a few of the names that might be given as examples of philosophers whose participation in public activities was continuous and distinguished. In my judgment these interests and activities added to their insight and understanding of life and the world.

Philosophers in the Orient, as brought out during the East-West Philosophers' Conference at the University of Hawaii during the summer of 1949, insist that philosophy is a way of life or an experiment in living. Philosophy is practical in the sense that it is related to life and its problems. Metaphysics, ethics, and religion are closely related. Furthermore, you are not a philosopher, according to many of these Eastern thinkers, unless you have convictions. Philosophers in the past both in the East and in the West have attempted to solve the problems of their own day. Why shouldn't we do the same especially since we face some situations which are new or unique?

In the second place, the emphasis upon comprehension and synthesis is the one which the informed public, as well as many teachers of philosophy, expect of us. At least this is true if we accept the conclusions of the members of the Commission on the Function of Philosophy in Liberal Education, as published in 1945 under the title Philosophy in American Education. During a year and a half the members of the Commission "took counsel not only with the teachers and members of our profession but also with many scholars of other fields of learning." There are four major demands: for integration, for community of mind, for reinterpretation of democracy, and for a philosophy of life. Speaking of integration, we are told that the term appeared so often in the discussions that the members of the Commission waited for it and winced when it came. They say: "One of the great historic tasks of philosophy has been the putting together of the results of human inquiry, religious, historical, scientific, into a consistent view of the world."

In the third place, we live in a time of rapid social change when a clear vision of worthy goals, leadership, and action are desperately needed. The problems which men must face are both domestic and international. Philosophers cannot solve these problems alone, it is true, but what group is better fitted to deal with them in an impartial way? We shall give attention to these problems or become even less influential than we are now. Upon the solution of these problems may depend not only the survival of philosophy but of man himself.

It is undoubtedly easier and safer to remain aloof from the world of affairs and to analyze and dissect the words of the philosophers of earlier times than to help America gain a constructive social purpose. This is no time for philosophers to be off in a corner whispering about their technical terms. The times demand something different.



In the fourth place, if philosophers desert their historical functions others will take over the tasks of philosophy and think of us as narrow specialists. This has in part taken place. Historians, theologians, and others are, in increasing numbers, giving us world-views and philosophies of man and of history. When college faculties see the need for integration, they seldom turn to philosophy departments.

A short time ago, in another state, I met on the train another member of the American Philosophical Association. I said, "I have not seen you recently at the meetings." "No," he said, "I have been rather busy and to tell the truth I seldom find the meetings vital or the papers very interesting." How frequently we hear persons say that they attend the meetings chiefly to meet their friends.

### Some Conclusions

A first course in philosophy, in my opinion, should have the following six characteristics:

1. Be self-contained. While demanding a considerable degree of maturity on the part of the students it should not depend upon other courses in philosophy, or be set up primarily as a gateway to the advanced courses.

2. Be Comprehensive. A first course should open up the field and its general problems. It should help students to think about some of the main problems of human interest in education, science, art, ethics or morals, religion, and social policy.

3. Be concerned with current or living issues. A first course in philosophy should not be merely another specialty or merely a course on methodology. It should deal with live issues and help students to think about some of the basic questions of their time. Reading for such a course might well include readings from some of the Great Masters as well as more contemporary material.

4. Be presented in clear and, so far as possible, non-technical language. In spite of all that we can do along this line philosophy will still be abstract and difficult for many students. We must not, however, make it more difficult than necessary.

5. Be presented in discussion groups in which members are encouraged to participate. In addition to reading and listening, students ought to express themselves in discussions. "Real education is self-education." The task of the teacher is to guide, and stimulate this process.

6. Be positive in so far as possible. The emphasis in the first course in philosophy should not be negative criticism. The aim should be to give students some help in developing a life view and a world view.



## STUDENT DEVELOPED COURSES

Ethel Tilley

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### I

For my first five minutes I shall repeat part of the article I wrote for the Newsletter of the Western Division.<sup>1</sup>

I was opening the first philosophy course offered at Brenau College in a dozen years. At the first session I asked, "What have you ever wondered about?"

These questions were listed: Was Socrates a philosopher? What did he teach? What is philosophy? What is life? What is a good outlook on life? Why are things the way they are? What is a proof that a thing is so? What should love be like? Is life worth while? Who said, "I think, therefore I am?" There followed questions about truth, revenge, and death.

I read part of the Myth of the Cave aloud.

At the second session, the questions proposed were: How can you be sure of being happy? What do you call it when somebody thinks he's the only person in the world? and so on.

I finished reading the Myth of the Cave, and we discussed it for a few minutes. Then we tackled our list of questions, combining some and rewording others. We decided to start with "What is the proof that a thing is so?" I explained what is meant by a criterion of truth and asked for suggestions to be brought for the third sessions.

At that session, many possible criteria of truth were offered--in many literary styles. I assigned reading in Professor Brightman's Introduction to Philosophy, and in the fourth and fifth sessions we continued to discuss criteria of truth. I read the Euthyphro to give a notion of Socrates' method of teaching (answering the first question asked in the first session) and concluded with a short talk on "the concept."

We went on to discuss questions in order of the students' preferences. Reading on love in the Symposium, the Phaedrus, and English poetry led to additional questions for discussion and assigned readings: beauty, the nature of the universe, and immortality.

Our discussion of happiness drifted into consideration of a summum bonum, value, and the question "Is the will free?" In hunting up "will," a student came upon Schopenhauer. Since we had talked about Kant, we had to distinguish between what Kant meant by will and what Schopenhauer meant by will.

Next we found ourselves in the problem of mechanistic versus teleological views, and then in the problem of the synoptic versus the analytic method.

For each topic we discussed, I assigned some readings, and class members found others for themselves. One of the high points of the semester for me was the casual report on Kant's categorical imperative given by a junior who presented it exactly as on other occasions she had read poems by Browning or paragraphs from current magazines.

1. "Introducing Philosophy on Brenau Campus," The Philosophers' Newsletter, p. 29, February 1949. (Ed.)



A student reported one morning, "I went to a movie last night, and I felt so intelligent! There was a professor. He taught by asking questions, like Socrates. He didn't bring up a thing that we hadn't discussed in class."

Another student spoke. "I was there too. They called the old professor Spinozy. They talked about the Stoics, and Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, and Locke--I think they mentioned Locke--and everybody. We had talked about every one of them in class."

"We have used the Socratic method a good deal in this class," a third student said. "One person says something, and another says something else."

Along our way we met such terms as metaphysics, atomism, logos, epistemology, idealism, pluralism, and such expressions as esse est percipi and sub specie aeternitatis. At the end of the semester the students assembled a list of terms and expressions, from which I deleted some as not being primarily philosophical, so that the number was left at fifty-seven. We also made a list of men's names. These terms and names we added to the problems we had discussed, and had the basis for our final examination.

Second semester, by vote of the class, we studied the philosophies of about a dozen thinkers. Also by vote of the class, we received newcomers into the group. Everyone helped them to understand and use philosophical lingo.

One senior, very busy with plays and a graduation speech recital, was one of the newcomers. I registered a C by her name in final grading, and privately feared that I ought to have registered a D. But this fall, when she visited the campus for sorority rushing, she rushed up to tell me that she had just finished reading Irwin Edman's Philosopher's Quest and was crazy about it and was referring to her class notes when she was not sure what a passage in a philosophical book meant. I feared, again privately, that I ought to have registered a B by her name. For my goal is better met by a growing enthusiasm for philosophy than by the specific amount of philosophy read during any single semester.

## II

For my second five minutes I shall speak of a teacher's responsibilities in developing a course in philosophy to meet students' interests.

First, the teacher's purposes. I propose these purposes to myself:

1. Be sure that the students enjoy the course while it is going on. Learn the students' interests, longings, and wonderings, such as "I wonder how I can be sure that I can get the most desirable man in Western Reserve University and live happily ever after?" I must turn that question and other student bewilderments into philosophical problems. And it is really not hard. Philosophy still begins in wonder.

2. Help students to establish habits of thinking about meaning and values. Young people may change their values from fraternity pins to frying pans, but their habits of studying and comparing values will carry on if they have been well started.

3. Implant a desire to continue to read philosophy. A good start toward this, I think, is reading aloud turn about in class, with the teacher present to drop seemingly careless explanations as unfamiliar terms come up.

4. With the desire, develop the ability to continue to read philosophy without supervision. Explain philosophical terms. Familiarize the readers with the general views of the major figures in the history of philosophy. Relate today's mention of a term or a philosopher's name to previous references to the term or the philosopher.

5. Provide for students' future happiness, according to William Lyon Phelps' definition that the happiest person is the person with the most interesting thoughts.

6. Make students feel at home in the universe, with the sense of familiarity and unfrightened meeting of oncoming events that at-home-ness suggests.



First, then, the teacher's purposes.

Second, the teacher must have clearly in mind an ideal content for a semester course.

Third, once every week or two, the teacher must study students' questions in relation to this ideal content.

Fourth, once every three or four weeks, the teacher must help pull class notes and memories into shape. This involves the teacher in keeping a careful notebook and writing up the notes as a good student does. By the end of the semester the group can write a syllabus which could be followed by a group that does not wish to shape its own course.

Fifth, I say to myself, "Never miss a chance for letting students see how much they have learned. Never miss a chance to make students feel competent to think. Never allow them to feel ridiculous. Make direct corrections as seldom as possible. Make all corrections as casually as possible, and immediately stress the best point in a student's remarks. Say often, "When you ask a question like that, you are really getting into the heart of the problem;" or, "You must attend a meeting of the American Philosophical Association. That is exactly the sort of question that makes a paper for the Association." Be delighted if a student can stump you with a question. These are the things I say to myself.

Sixth, remember that not what the teacher "covers" but what the students introcept is what counts.

### III

For my third five minutes I shall read from a sophomore's summing up of our first nine sessions this semester. This year I started out by asking, "What have you ever wanted?" I read now from a student's paper, editing to the extent of correcting the plural of criterion and substituting reconcile for reconciliate. I have not corrected dangling modifiers and non-parallel constructions.

"Since the philosophical spirit deals mostly with values, we started our discussion with an inward look at our own desires and values. We found that upon trying to classify them, some overlapped each other and some were almost the same idea expressed in different language. The goal of human achievement seemed to be the attainment of happiness. Happiness was of different types to different people...All of our desires cannot be realized at one given time, hence dissatisfaction and frustration.

Next, we tried to define some of our values and terms. We found that these terms which were used so loosely in our daily life were so abstract that a correct definition of any one of them was high impossible. In our inexperienced way we attempted to define such abstract words as happiness and loyalty. Realizing that we could not do this alone, we turned to Socrates.

The Socratic method, which consists of questionings, the object of which is to draw out from a person a consistent expression of something supposed to be implicitly known by all rational beings, was clearly brought out. Socrates' and Euthyphro's conversation about holiness showed the common fault of man, that of believing that we know everything about everything. Only when our ignorance is demonstrated to us will we admit our faults and resolve to start over again.

For a view of happiness we looked up Aristotle's essay on Pleasure and Happiness. (This is a section from his Ethics.) He gave the conflicting views on the subject and showed that pleasures are of different kinds, some good, and others bad. He showed that the summation of happiness lies in the activity of the highest, best part of our nature.

During this time we also studied Plato's Tripartite. (She uses this as a capitalized noun.) Self-control, courage, and wisdom were the three virtues given to the artisans, guardians, and philosophers, respectively. Aristotle's classification shares Plato's idea that reason in the mind of man is the highest step. Man shares the process of living with plants, shares with animals the ability to move about. Man alone has rationality, ability to reason.



"We studied W. G. Everett's Moral Values and listed his hierarchy of values. From this study we learned that all values are interrelated and interdependent as we had seen at the beginning of our discussion. Values we saw are of two kinds, intrinsic and instrumental, and that the arrangement of values in a scale was influenced by this. (She summarizes the material from Everett.) This study helped us to note the relationship between some of our own values and the disproportion some of us have in our lives.

One member of the class on the first day expressed the wish to know how faith accomplishes things, whether we can know by faith. This is the proposition of faith versus reason. In order to be able to have a better understanding of the matter, we did research into Thilly's History of Philosophy. (This is the text this student happened to consult.) We discovered that in the Middle Ages, faith and reason came into conflict. We considered the views of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. We read in W. E. Hocking's Types of Philosophy about different views of how we know...(There are listed seven types of philosophy, with brief explanatory notes.)

This discussion led us to wonder how true is truth? Again we turned to authorities on the question. In Brightman's Introduction to Philosophy we found criteria for truth which are used nowadays. (There follows a summary of Brightman's section on criterion of truth.)

The method of scientific investigation when applied to human reason was discussed and disputed. On the negative side, excerpts from Hugh Tigner's The Pretensions of Science were submitted. (This article was brought by this sophomore from her text in English literature. There follows a summary of Tigner's views.)

The next discussion topic taken up was the difference between science and philosophy. Science specializes and deals with restricted fields of human experience and analyzes parts of phenomena. Philosophy, on the other hand, is inclusive for it aims to interpret what is common to all fields, and to understand the relations of the special sciences to one another."

And I am this week-end in a state of considerable unease, for the girls have decided that next week we shall start on miracles.



## PHILOSOPHY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Earl E. Edgar

Kansas State College

The aim of citizenship education in a democracy is to develop individuals who are responsible members of groups. The group in terms of which "citizenship" is usually defined--political organization in the conventional sense--refers to only one, although certainly an important one, of the groups to which citizenship pertains. The family, the church, the labor union, professional and social and cultural organizations,--the purpose of none of these is primarily political, but it is within them that the life of the community is largely carried on. If the quality of that life is to be democratic, each group must be composed of responsible individuals. And in a democratic social order, responsibility cannot consist merely in obedience to the will of the group, as appropriate as that attitude may be under certain circumstances. Ultimately, the responsible individual is one who weighs the consequences of his acts on the basis of standards independent of mere command or convention.

Thus, responsibility is first expressed in our choice of groups on the basis of the ends they serve and the moral quality of the means they employ. Furthermore, within each group there are three processes to which responsibility attaches. The group deliberates about specific ends, executes its decisions, and then for the sake of greater effectiveness evaluates the consequences of the action taken. The individual, therefore, must be both willing and able to deliberate wisely on the action to be taken, participate in the execution of the policy, and contribute to the development and application of the criteria for evaluation. Finally, there are interrelationships between groups and their aims until the ultimate context within which the individual life is led is the Great Community itself. The aims of any given group are almost inevitably partial, whereas the quality of the individual's life derives from the whole. Unless we bring to bear upon the part the implications of the whole, the attempt at associated living is seriously threatened.

The foregoing analysis indicates that responsible membership in groups involves three skills to which philosophy can make an important contribution; First, the ability to make wise judgments of value; second, the ability and habit of forming attitudes on a rational basis; and third, the ability and habit of considering specific problems from a systematic and comprehensive point of view. These indeed are three of the important aims of philosophy, whether philosophy is viewed as conflicting doctrines on certain kinds of problems or as a method appropriate to the consideration of these problems.

The remainder of these remarks will be devoted to a brief analysis of the nature of the contribution of philosophy to each of these three skills of responsible citizenship.

### I

It would seem obvious that responsible membership in groups involves the ability to make wise judgments of value. Yet there is a common belief that courses in the social sciences alone constitute an education for citizenship. But insofar as these disciplines are genuinely scientific they cannot attempt to deal adequately with the problems involved in establishing ends for action. For this, we must admit we are involved in philosophic deliberations, which are not to be confused with statistics on slums and crime, or techniques for choosing fighter pilots.



This is not the point of view of Mr. Stuart Chase, who has composed a eulogy of the social sciences under the title of The Proper Study of Mankind, in which he makes no effort to hide his contempt of philosophy, religion, and ethics. "These studies," he says, "are now generally classed with the humanities, where one sits in an armchair and reads the Great Books under the benign smile of Dr. Hutchins, and where scientific research has no place." Those of you who have read Mr. Chase's book will know I cite him not for the intellectual quality of his opinions but because of the influence they promise to exercise in a textbook. We live in an era in which the phrase "human engineering" can be accepted with complacency, an era typified by the title of an article which appeared in the American Scholar a year ago, "Mass Media and the Engineering of Consent." It is to this that we are reduced by the "Science Can Save Us" school of thought. If we are to preserve citizenship education from this error, we must adopt explicitly the aim of developing the man of practical wisdom in the Aristotelian sense. We must take seriously the problems of making wise value judgments by consciously directing our efforts to developing the man with "a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good for men."

For example, citizens are called upon to determine the kind of educational system we should have in this country. Such a determination will rest ultimately upon the answer to at least three questions: First, who should be educated, that is, how many? and for how long? Second, what should be taught? Thirdly, how should it be taught, that is, how should the educational system be organized, and what in general are the appropriate methods of teaching? These questions raise problems of ethics, political philosophy, and metaphysics. "Democracy" is not an answer, for both the meaning and the truth of that concept are in question today; and in choosing between ideologies, a fundamental base line is needed. How can "democratic values" be examined without answering the prior question, What is the good life? and its companion question, What is the good society? And how can we tell what is good for man unless we know what man's nature is? This last question can never be answered solely by the social sciences, which can only tell us what man has done, whereas we need to know what he ought to do. Finally, there is the basic issue of the organization of the sciences. This includes not only the logical interdependence of the theoretical sciences, but also the relationships between the practical, productive, and theoretical sciences. A conception of these relationships is reflected in curricula from the standpoint of scope and sequence in relation to election and prescription. It also expresses itself in the kind of human being developed by the educational system.

The question of the materials to be used in developing the ability to make wise judgments of value is one with which the staff of the Institute of Citizenship at Kansas State College has concerned itself for the past three years. Our experience has been that a fairly extensive use of philosophical texts can be successful at the undergraduate level. In the course we offer at the junior-senior level on the problems of education just analyzed, the reading list includes Books 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 of Plato's Republic; some passages from the Physics and Metaphysics of Aristotle, and Books I, II and VI of the Ethics; selections from Comenius' The Great Didactic; Rousseau's Emile; Locke's Thoughts Concerning Education; Comte's Course of Positive Philosophy; chapters in Newman's Idea of a University; Spencer's essay, "What Knowledge is of Most Worth?" and chapters in Dewey's Democracy and Education, and Hutchins' Education for Freedom.

The determination of how early in the school system philosophical materials may be introduced cannot be made, of course, on an a priori basis. As a result of work in curriculum development which we have been carrying on during the past year with several high schools in Kansas, the senior classes of one of the Kansas High School systems are trying out the materials developed by the Social Science I course in the College of the University of Chicago. These materials include a number of selections dealing with questions of political philosophy, although not all of these are selections from political philosophers. Our experience confirms that of many others that Supreme Court decisions, for example, are extremely useful for developing an understanding of American political ideas which seeks to go beyond the descriptive level and yet maintain its touch with actual operating institutions.



Because the successful use of these materials is related to other factors than the age of the student, such as the ability of the teacher and the sequence in which materials are read, great care must be exercised in making a decision on an "empirical" basis. There is need for systematic experimentation with such materials, including careful evaluation of results. The latter is most important: for example, to my knowledge no evaluation of the profitability to adults of Great Books courses has yet been made. Hence, we are still unable to go further than to say that surely it would do anyone good to discuss and think about the kind of problems raised by the readings in these series. And finally, there is a need for a program of the training of teachers which goes far beyond what they receive now, whether in preparation for the duties of high school or college instruction.

## II

There is another reason for the desirability of introducing philosophical texts as early as possible into programs of citizenship education which may be discussed in relation to the formation of attitudes.

Attitudes are tendencies toward action, awaiting the proper stimulus to proceed into overt behavior. The notion that they should be determined by rational deliberation, while it may be paid homage in such assemblages as these, in reality runs counter to the pluralistic tradition in American life. As Peter Drucker observes in a study of Calhoun, "Organization on the basis of sectional and interest compromise is both the distinctly American form of political organization and the cornerstone of practically all major political institutions of the modern U. S. A." Thus it has been a political asset on the part of one of our legislators to be known as Cotton Ed Smith. Anyone who teaches in the area of citizenship education knows that students regard it as only realistic to accept the view that attitudes on public affairs are determined entirely by the self-interests and passions of men, and the compromising of them, rather than by reason.

Yet it is clear that the factional lump must, so to speak, be leavened, at least at crucial points, by the operation of reason. If our attitudes toward minority groups, toward labor organizations and the owners of capital, toward the activities of government, toward other nations, are to be based primarily on selfish interest, passion, prejudice and special pleading, then society will lack a principle to weld its dissident and contending parts together. A program of citizenship education must, then, have a method for developing students whose commitment is to the formation of rational attitudes.

There are those who see this to consist in indoctrination in the "American Way of Life." But if that phrase indicates an emphasis upon individual freedom, it implies also that a premium must be put upon individual responsibility. As far as formal instruction is concerned, this can be done only by a method which enables the individual to take upon himself this responsibility. It is not done by making him the passive recipient of another's ideas, whether by lecture or textbook. It means a method which fulfills certain requirements: (1) The student must be made aware of the assumptions of democracy, the implication of those assumptions for behavior in specific problem areas, and the relationship of both to his actual behavior and the behavior of his society. (2) The student must be forced to formulate his own ideas and reformulate in his own terms the ideas of others which bear on these issues and trace the relationships just indicated. (3) The student must do this in conjunction with his contemporaries in the class, in order to escape purely idiosyncratic attitudes; also because the ultimate limitation upon social action in a free society is the necessity for agreement among the members of that society. (4) Above all, the student must be implicated in the process, to say Yea or Nay to its results, however tentatively, in order that he may not consider himself involved simply in another course in the History of Ideas.

The method which seems to meet these specifications best is the discussion method, where the function of the instructor is to stimulate and help students to discuss the problems among themselves. If the student is to apply principles to contemporary situations, descriptive materials will be needed. But in getting at the principles themselves, without which the whole process is aimless and naive, the value of philosophical sources is clear.



Furthermore, and this is crucial, if you are concerned with the development of attitudes on a rational basis, you will need materials in which men are employing rational methods of developing and defending attitudes in which they believe. In attempting to provide students with a feeling of the reality of the problems, and some idea of the kind of thinking involved in solving them, no compilation of facts or summary of other men's conclusions can be superior to documents which represent the efforts of men who are concerned with the truth of their beliefs and who show that concern by careful attempts to expound the grounds and logic of their conviction.

Thus, in our freshman course "Freedom and Responsibility," we use as a frame of reference the definition of democracy in terms of Shared Respect, Shared Power, Economic Balance, and Enlightenment, which is suggested by the Encyclopedia Britannica films "Democracy" and "Despotism." We have found an excellent starting place for a discussion of Shared Respect in those chapters of the first book of Aristotle's Politics in which he is defending natural slavery. Valuable also are the pages of Paine's Rights of Man where, against Burke, he is asserting the natural rights doctrine. Both Locke's Second Treatise and Mill's Representative Government provide fruitful bases for a discussion of Shared Power, as does the Apology and Crito in connection with the meaning of Enlightenment.

This would also indicate an argument for using short selections rather than whole books, because the former make it possible to do the intensive analysis which is desirable for achieving the objective in question. The ability to detect and analyze assumptions, trace the logic of an argument, and compare the congruity of conclusions with the facts of experience is a time-consuming process. Without this, however, there is a haziness and vagueness of thought which not only frustrates your purpose but leaves the student worse off in his conviction that these really are only "matters of opinion."

### III

The ability and habit of looking at specific problems from a systematic and comprehensive point of view is needed as a corrective to the inevitable partiality of particular groups. This characteristic of responsible group membership is in conformity with a major philosophic impulse. In the great tradition of philosophy, at least, the attempt has been to get a world view, to see the interrelationship of the parts, to get principles in terms of which the totality of things may be explained.

It is, I suppose, tautologous to say that the specialist views a problem from a single standpoint; the problem is purely one of medicine, or physics, or engineering. This division of labor can be extremely productive under a certain condition, namely, that someone gets these points of view together in a coherent picture. Lilienthal's TVA, Democracy on the March includes a serious discussion of this problem of coordinating the skill of many specialists, a problem of particular concern for an organization attempting to deal with resources as a unity. For example, a dam is built and the waters of a huge manmade lake will cover tens of thousands of acres of farms as well as cemeteries, schools, highways, parks, or even entire towns. There is no debate as to the purchase of the land that will be under water; but what additional land along the new shoreline should also be purchased? The problem of specialism is vividly illustrated by the different decisions which were urged by the TVA's agricultural experts, the expert on public recreation, the malaria-control expert, the highway engineer, the power expert, the expert in navigation, the archeologist, and the expert in public revenue. "The final question was always this," Lilienthal says, "Looking at the situation as a whole, and not merely at the professional or technical standards of anyone or several of the specialized interests, what course of action would yield the best results as judged by the common purpose, the goal of the whole undertaking--the well-being of the people of the region."

This is the kind of judgment the citizen must make, for he must pick the men who are to decide on the administrator's task, and he must evaluate the performance of his representatives in this respect and through them the performance of the administrators. All this calls for the same unified point of view, the point of view which is characterized by the phrase, "taking all things into consideration," the hall mark of the person with a general as distinguished from a specialized education only. It is precisely this point of view which



philosophy fosters. Like the philosopher, the citizen has an ambitious task, but the attempt when it is made is due not to overweening ambition but to the demand made upon him by the situation. It would be preferable to be able to solve the farm problem simply in terms of the farmer's interests, without reference to business and labor, without reference to the total economic situation and without reference to the political and moral values which that system affects, nationally and internationally. It would be preferable, but impossible without getting into perhaps even more trouble than is required to view things as a whole.

That is why the work of philosophers, their willingness to attempt to arrive at principles in terms of which a mass of facts can be made intelligible, is so valuable for teaching purposes. For example, a consideration of the problems of War, Peace, and World Community, the title of one of our courses, is a vital part of citizenship education. But the vastness of the undertaking is appalling; what is needed is a frame of reference in terms of which the relevant material can be organized and evaluated. For this purpose we use pertinent chapters from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and the central concepts therein; natural man, natural law, the social compact, sovereignty. These enable the student to discuss the subject in terms of considerations of psychology; the nature and kinds of law and the relation of law, government, and peace; the factors involved in making the social compact, and hence the possibilities of world government; and the function of sovereign power in causing war and preserving peace.

This illustration may clarify one other aspect of this use of philosophical texts. They are used to teach philosophy only incidentally; certainly it is incidental if students learn philosophical systems. You are not interested in Hobbes or in materialism; you are interested in using Hobbes to make it possible to think about a contemporary problem. Few people study philosophy as a major interest with the idea that philosophers have no light to shed on contemporary life, so this is a matter of emphasis, yet I think the distinction is clear enough. I am even willing to be so heretical as to say that it is permissible to do an injustice to a philosopher in the good cause. For example, it may be unjust to Machiavelli to read only The Prince, omitting the Discourses, but there is such a phenomenon as machiavellianism in the world and The Prince is useful for its analysis and evaluation.

## V

Experience indicates that a program of citizenship education, in order to discover methods and materials appropriate to its problem, must take into account the three factors of scientism, irrationalism, and specialism. I have suggested that in doing so citizenship education will need to call upon philosophy for developing in students the ability to make wise decisions as to value; the ability and habit of forming attitudes on a rational basis; and the ability and habit of considering specific problems from a systematic and comprehensive point of view....



## THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN A GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Louis K. Zerby

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Descartes, in commenting about his past work in philosophy, wrote: "Philosophy teaches us to speak with an appearance of truth on all things and causes us to be admired by the less learned." I hope the program for philosophy, which I suggest here, will be of a different sort. As many introductory courses are now designed, a student writing about his first course would, I am afraid, say almost what Descartes said.

I take it my job this morning is to do at least two things, one to describe a particular actual general education program and the other to make certain recommendations as to what I think ought to be the function of philosophy in an ideal general education program.

The particular general education program I should like to describe is the one in operation at Michigan State College in East Lansing; the ideal program exists to my knowledge in no college.

Obviously I do not have time to discuss all of the seven basic courses at Michigan State College. These courses are Written and Spoken English, History of Civilization, Literature and Fine Arts, Physical, Biological and Social Science and Effective Living. While some salient points in the history of philosophy are discussed in History of Civilization, some problems of aesthetics discussed in Literature and Fine Arts, and the scientific method discussed in the science courses, most of the philosophy in Michigan State's general education program is to be found in the course called Effective Living.

Even in this course there is little that would be called philosophy in a technical and traditional sense. The teachers and formulators of the course complain that the writings of philosophers are too involved, abstruse, and remote from the lives of their students. Thus, there is a stubborn and persistent attempt to avoid technical terms and to stay within the vocabulary and problems of the students. As one of the teachers in this course told me: "Philosophy insofar as it is concerned with the problems of philosophers has no place in general education; insofar as it is concerned with the problems of people, it has an important place." The teachers in this course, then, are attempting to teach what they take to be important in philosophy without using an abstruse philosophical jargon. What are these problems which are taken to be important - these problems of people?

In the first term of work the student is taught a number of facts about personality - how it develops, how the values of the individual are tied in with the values of our society, types of values, and criteria in terms of which one can evaluate values. These problems are obviously not philosophical problems in any traditional sense, but neither are they problems which belong exclusively to psychology or sociology. It is the theory of this course that for general education it is better to let teachers from various fields work together on overlapping problems than to have a part of a course designed and taught by philosophers, another by psychologists, etc.

In the second term, problems revolving around marriage and the family are treated in much the same manner as the problems of the individual were treated in the first term. In the third term, problems of the individual in relation to groups are discussed. Here concepts such as "democracy," "social intelligence" and "despotism" are considered in the light again of individual problems and practical applications.

Here it should be pointed out that at one time actual writings of philosophers were read by the students, but the teachers of this course have come to feel that it is better to rewrite these source materials so that they better harmonize with the general ideals and direction of this particular course.



It should be stressed here that the teachers of general education at Michigan State do not intend to introduce the students to philosophy or to any other academic subject. They are attempting to create mature attitudes and mature minds in the students.

The question now arises whether participation in such courses as above indicated is all that philosophy can contribute to a general education program. Here my answer must certainly and emphatically be 'no.' I believe that philosophy can make a contribution to other courses in general education and important contributions: but courses in philosophy, if taught philosophically, are also general education courses. The whole question amounts to this: "How can a course in philosophy best be taught philosophically?"

Before I answer this question, however, I should like to point out that the course I have in mind probably should not be required of all students but merely offered for those who elect to take it and also that it should not be designed entirely or even primarily for philosophy majors. I am thinking of a philosophy course which is genuine philosophy but not the sort of intensive and extensive course needed by majors. The course I have in mind should include basic logic, a consideration of some important problem or problems in ethics—for example, meaning of ethical terms, is goodness a natural or non-natural quality or indeed is it a quality at all—the difference between descriptive and normative statements and the epistemological problem. Here I should like to see the student go carefully and critically through the arguments of such figures as Plato, Descartes, Berkeley and Hume. Needless to say, this would be at least a year's course.

Let me begin to answer the question of how to teach philosophy by giving you philosophically a quotation from Whitehead. In his essay on "The Aims of Education" Whitehead says:

"What education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has peculiar reference to the life of the being possessing it." Any course in philosophy which does less than this is failing not only as philosophy but also as education. The average survey type of introduction which discusses seven or eight ideas on each page and which passes off Kant's transcendental idealism in a couple of paragraphs cannot possibly give to the students "an intimate sense for the power, the beauty and the structure of ideas." To do this one must take a few men or a few problems and discuss them exhaustively. If this is done, the student will be both learning something about philosophy (in the only way anyone can learn about philosophy) by philosophizing and at the same time acquiring a general education, an education which does not consist in accumulating a mass and mess of unrelated facts to be memorized without thought, but an education which consists in gaining Whitehead's sense for ideas. To teach philosophy in this way one must philosophize for the student and with the student. A logic teacher was once raked over the coals by a student who said she just couldn't understand what logic was all about. In her other courses—she particularly liked history—she could take notes from her teacher, memorize the notes, reproduce them on an examination and receive an 'A' in the course. Logic, she complained, was different. Here one was expected not merely to reproduce ideas but actually to produce ideas.

In teaching students to philosophize, to think things out all the way, we are not merely teaching students to respect ideas, we are also teaching students to recognize and to formulate those abstract principles which are implicit in all life. The general nature of these principles is apparent when we consider what philosophy is about; for philosophy is not mere criticism but a criticism of criticism, not mere explanation but explanation of explanation, not plain knowledge but knowledge of knowledge and not mere reasoning but reasoning about reasoning.

For those who argue that elementary students cannot pursue issues to their basic presuppositions and that we must therefore be content to give them brief characterizations of leading types and problems of philosophy, I would answer that inert ideas, regardless of their quantity, can never properly be called philosophy. If we know lots of fragmentary items about philosophy we may indeed speak with the appearance of truth on all things but we have not yet learned philosophy, that is, to philosophize; we may be admired by the less learned, but we will be held in contempt by the more learned.



## PHILOSOPHY AS INTEGRATOR OF A LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM

Troy Organ

Pennsylvania College for Women

John Dale Russell, Director of Higher Education of the United States Office of Education, said recently that liberal education is not as much a matter of subject as of the point of view from which subject matter is presented. If the point of view, he added, is that of inculcating broad understanding, it is liberal; if the point of view is narrow technical proficiency or operational skill, it is not liberal. Any subject becomes a part of liberal education, Russell contended, when its historical origins are considered and when it is related to a wide variety of other subjects. He illustrated his remarks from his own experience of a shorthand class in which the material was treated liberally. While we may recognize that there is some truth in what Russell has said, I doubt that he or any of us would defend a four year liberal arts program consisting of 120 semester hours of shorthand, however liberally taught. A program of liberal education is constituted by certain subject matter as well as by the method of presentation of any subject matter. In this paper "liberal education" will be used to denote these non-specialized and non-vocational attitudes, abilities, and knowledge which should be the common possession of educated men and women.

During the academic year of 1945-46 the faculty of the Pennsylvania College for Women examined the curriculum of the school and came to the conclusion that while many liberal arts subjects were being offered and many were being taught liberally, the college offered no unique liberal arts program. The curriculum had grown through the years in Topsy fashion. Changes were needed. But dropping a few courses from the catalog, or adding a few courses, or revising some of the existing courses, would not remedy the situation. Something more fundamental was required. Therefore, the faculty temporarily by-passed the curriculum and spent several months determining the abilities, the beliefs, the attitudes, and the knowledge which seem desirable in the graduates of a four year liberal arts college. After these educational objectives were established the faculty set itself to the task of forming techniques for the achievement of these ends. The faculty realized that extra-class activities as well as class activities must be considered as means for the realization of these objectives, but during the three years in which our new educational program has been in effect the faculty and the students-- for the students have been in on the planning from the very first--have concentrated their attention on the curricular aspects of the program. This year a faculty-student committee is beginning a thorough analysis of the co-curricular means of attaining our educational goals.

According to the educational objectives of PCW all liberally educated people should be informed in five areas of learning, viz.,

1. Man as a human organism.
2. The universe he inhabits.
3. His social relationships.
4. His aesthetic achievements.
5. His attempt to organize his experience.

As a means for the achievement of these goals of knowledge in our educational objectives, as well as a means for the partial achievement of goals concerned with abilities, beliefs, and attitudes, we have developed at PCW a 67 semester hour basic curriculum. This basic curriculum is required of all our students with certain exceptions for those students who can demonstrate advanced knowledge and ability in a battery of exemption examinations. Courses which have been developed for the realization of our goals include: a year course in human physiology and psychology; a two year sequence of courses in the sciences; a



year course in modern society; a year course in Western civilization; a semester course in world culture; a two year course in the arts which is taught by members of the departments of English, music, fine arts, drama, and dance; and a year course in philosophy which is designed to consider man's attempt to organize his experience.

This latter course, which we call "Philosophy of Life," is required of all students in their senior year. The course has a set of definite objectives. I might add that the instructors of every course in the basic curriculum have worked out a set of objectives for the courses they teach. These objectives are more than statements on paper, for they are discussed with the students in the classes several times during the year, and from time to time the instructors must defend the objectives before the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The objectives of the Philosophy of Life course are:

A. In terms of student development:

1. An understanding of the unitary character of human knowledge and practice in thinking which crosses the traditional academic divisions.
2. An understanding of the roles the various educational disciplines play in the full life for man.
3. An appreciation of man's efforts to deal analytically and synthetically with the basic philosophical and religious problems.
4. An understanding of the need of each generation to reach an integration of thought and action.
5. The development of the student's ability to consider critically and responsibly the student's own beliefs, aims, and values.

B. In terms of subject matter:

1. An analysis of the content of a philosophy of life.
2. A knowledge of the principal solutions which have been offered for the problems considered in a philosophy of life.
3. An articulation of the student's own tentative philosophy of life.

This course is a functional course designed to assist the student in grasping the significance of his own education. Or, to put this in another fashion, it is intended to alleviate a disorder common to college seniors which I call "educational constipation"--a disorder brought about by a glut of unassimilated information. This course is built on the theory that the senior year of college is the ideal time for a person to reflect upon the values which will shape his life. Havelock Ellis once said that age sixty is early enough for the formation of a "definitely conscious philosophic credo," but surely age twenty-one is not too early to consider seriously the way of life one wishes to live. For most people the senior year in college is the last opportunity to consider facts and values from a somewhat detached position. The function of the course might be stated as the integration of the liberal arts program around the student's efforts to form a personal philosophy of life. This course does not give the student a ready-made philosophy of life. I agree with the 1945 study of the Commission on the Function of Philosophy in Liberal Education that philosophy is "a process of inquiry, not of advocacy." The only commitment I seek to induce is a commitment to philosophizing itself.

The organization of the course follows the program of basic education of our college. The four areas of knowledge, the individual, the natural world, the social world, and the creative world, are considered from the aspects of knowledge, reality, and value. The course opens with an analysis of the values which the individual has for himself, e.g., his goals of life, his quest for happiness, his vocational aspiration, his desire for friendships. This leads to an analysis of the nature of self, its freedom, its immortality, and the mind-body relationship. And this leads into problems of the sources and limits of knowledge, and the criteria of meaningfulness and truth. Then we move on to examine selected problems in the areas of the natural world, the social world, and the creative world which seem to be relevant to a personal philosophy of life.



Each student possesses a syllabus of the course which lists under each topic a statement of the problem, a set of questions appropriate to the topic, and a list of recommended readings. Each student also has a copy of a volume of selected readings which I have entitled The Examined Life. I have selected these readings on the basis of their ability to arouse student thought. In the classroom I follow in main the principle I recently heard propounded with great seriousness at an educators' conference that "Unless the student discussion has no relation whatsoever to the topic of the day, it is better to allow student discussion than to insist upon a lecture." Nonetheless I like to believe that the quality of student discussion is improved by an occasional lecture. My students profit from the use of examinations of opinion such as the "Inventory of General Goals of Life" prepared by the Cooperative Study in General Education of the American Council of Education, "A Test of Opinions" found in the Appendix of Ethics and Social Policy, by Wayne Leys, and Charles W. Morris' preference examination, "Ways to Live." I have worked out a similar examination which I give to my students at the close of the course. I require three papers of moderate length during the year and a longer paper at the end of the year. The last paper bears the ambitious title "My Philosophy of Life at Present."

Since I have taught this course for but three years, and since prior to this year it was offered as an elective, I am not ready to make a reliable evaluation of the course as a requirement in a liberal arts program. But I do offer the following convictions and observations:

1. If a student is to take but one course in philosophy during the four years of undergraduate study, I believe that the course should come at the junior or the senior year. By that time the student has been exposed to ideas upon which he can philosophize.
2. Reading about philosophy and listening to some one lecture about philosophy are poor substitutes for philosophizing.
3. A student appreciates the value of philosophy when philosophical problems and possible solutions are related to the student's own life. Many students move from interest in their own philosophy into inquiries that are historical and systematic.
4. This approach to philosophy gives it respectability in the eyes of teachers in other departments. Colleagues in other departments may doubt the ability of the philosopher to increase human knowledge, but I find they agree that philosophy is indispensable for the elevation of the human mind. The new curriculum at PCW has promoted interdepartmental cooperation and understanding. Last year I visited over fifty class meetings on our campus in order to appreciate the work my students are doing in other areas of the basic curriculum. Twice a semester my Philosophy of Life classes meet for an extended evening meeting with two other faculty members for an evening of discussion of philosophical problems. Both the students and the faculty members look forward to these meetings. A copy of the syllabus of the course has been given to each faculty member, and a few of the faculty members have read all the readings.

The highest compliment the course has received was made by a student last spring who said, "This course makes me wish I had taken more of every subject in college."



## SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP I ON INTRODUCTORY COURSES IN PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

Merrit H. Moore

Knox College

The discussion was opened with a statement by the chairman suggesting certain lines that might serve as guiding threads if the discussion was to be kept within reasonable range. The following points were mentioned and accepted by the group as a framework for our discussion.

- I. We should refrain from discussing differences in philosophic points of view except as these may be shown to relate specifically to the problem of teaching introductory courses in philosophy;
- II. We should focus our attention primarily on four points:
  - A. The objects of introductory courses in philosophy;
  - B. The methods of instruction best suited to introductory courses;
  - C. The content of introductory courses;
  - D. The level at which such introductory courses should be given to assure their maximum effectiveness.

While the comments by members of the group often made reference to more than one of the above points, for the purposes of this report the import of the remarks have been grouped under the suggested topics. Care has been taken not to distort or misrepresent the gist of the various statements when organized in this way.

### A. Objectives

The various comments can be summarized in this way to reflect the consensus of the group: The broad purpose of an introductory course in philosophy is the obvious one of introducing students to the areas and disciplines of philosophy as these are defined by both historical and contemporary practice. More specifically, the objective of such a course should be to acquaint students with the nature and significance of philosophical problems and the various methods and conditions involved in their presentation, clarification, and "solution," and in the students' own philosophizing.

It was generally agreed that such courses should be broadly "integrative." This function may relate primarily

1. to the range of problems included within the field of philosophy, or
2. to the interrelating of other areas and disciplines.

In the first instance, the introductory course might well be an epitome of the whole curriculum in philosophy provided this curriculum itself is conceived in terms of an adequate "philosophy" for a set of course offerings.

In the second instance, the introductory course would

1. serve to give unified meaning to the student's whole educational experience,
2. function especially to bring out the philosophical aspects of the various areas and disciplines considered,
3. in many cases, at least, be but one phase of a course cooperatively undertaken by instructors from a variety of fields.

These two functions are not intrinsically incompatible as objectives. Greater emphasis on one or the other will, however, effect radically the content of the course and the method used in its presentation.

<sup>1</sup> See the "Introductory Note" for the description and role of the discussion groups. In each case the discussion reports have been written by the group chairmen. (Ed.)



It was generally agreed that whichever of these objectives dominated the organization of a particular course, the following should seriously be considered and should be implemented by the course: like the whole of the philosophy curriculum the introductory course should be related to what is conceived to be the purpose of education; the examination of the topics included in the course should be more penetrating at the successively higher levels, from the freshman to the senior year, at which the course is presented. The point was made repeatedly and with some emphasis, that one objective of any course in philosophy is to assist students in their own philosophizing.

A considerable number of the participants in the discussion indicated that the introductory course should open, if not be completely determined, by "student-centered" problems. The point was made that we must consider the student, his background, his relative maturity and the variety of his interests. It was indicated that considerable variation will be found in this regard as a result of differences in the composition of the student body, notable where the institution is for men, for women, or coeducational, and the quality of students resulting from the admissions policy of each institution.

Other members of the group reacted quite strongly to the above suggestion. Their position in sum was this: "Student-centered" courses often tend to be vapid, full of "sweetness and light", related to trivial rather than fundamental problems, without character, and, therefore, of negligible value, because they lack a directive principle. This was rebutted by the statement that these undesirable characteristics

1. may be found in any course however "centered" and
2. can be avoided by a skillful instructor who knows where he and, therefore, his course is going.

A mediating note was sounded by one or two persons to the effect that we must recognize the necessity of discovering a reasonable compromise between an ideal purpose and content and the practical limitations imposed by the level of the course, the maturity of the students and similar matters.

Finally, the discussion gave rise to the question, "Why an introductory course at all?" It was pointed out

1. that there was little apparent agreement as to what the objectives, content, methods and level of such a course should be,
2. that in practice ethics, logic, the history of philosophy have been used in various institutions as the "introductory" course, and
3. that it is desirable and motivationally valuable to make it possible for students to have their first contact with philosophy through any one of several specific courses at different levels.

A specific question was raised as to whether or not the objective of the course, and necessarily its content, should not be determined by such things as the Graduate Record Examination. This would require the introductory course, if not all courses in philosophy, to be essentially "factual" in character.

This question was countered by a forceful rejoinder. The objective of the introduction course and all other courses in philosophy, like the objectives of the curriculum for the whole institution, should be determined by the educational aims in terms of which each is developed and carried out. An effort should be made in all cases to define objectives clearly and realistically in terms of institutional needs, facilities, and purposes. The organization of the course, the preparation of syllabi, the selection of texts and the preparation and character of examinations must be determined by these objectives if the course itself is to have unity and significance for student and instructor alike. To build a course on the basis of examinations developed by outside sources results in a situation in which the usual relation between a horse and his cart is reversed with the usual unfortunate, undesirable and ineffective results!



It may fairly be said that the group agreed in general to the following: It is educationally desirable to offer a general introductory course in philosophy; the student should have an opportunity to enter the field early in his academic experience; great care should be exercised in the selection of topics and materials to avoid a course which is little more than a splatter of smatterings; the course preferably should be elective and not required as the first course in philosophy for all students; and, finally, the course should seek to clarify philosophic problems and principles.

## B. Methods

Suggestions were made by several participants in regard to procedural and directional practices. There was some agreement that

1. the course should begin with "student-centered" problems and move to a treatment of "philosophy-centered" problems, and
2. the instructor should play a considerable, if not dominant role, in the selection and organization of topics, moving toward a development of a situation in which discussion methods predominate. Some participants felt very strongly that the discussion technique, involving use of the "Socratic method" should be used from the beginning not only in introductory courses, but in all courses in philosophy.

The observation was repeatedly made that the method of conducting the course, no less than its content, will be determined in the last analysis upon such factors as class size, maturity of students, heterogeneity or homogeneity of class composition with respect to sex, level in college and so forth, and the skill of the instructor in using one of several recognized techniques. One interesting bit of polemics developed at this point. A representative for a woman's college stressed the need for a tactful, considerate and cooperative approach as the most effective way of getting students interested in philosophy. A reply was made by a representative of a men's college to the effect that it was both necessary and profitable to use techniques which challenge the students and stimulate their "fighting spirit." If these observations are typical and valid, the problem which confronts the teacher in a coeducation institution is one to dismay any but the most courageous, tactful, sensitive, perceptive and skillful!

There was some feeling that instructors for introductory courses should be selected principally because of their skill as teachers and even more principally because of their skill in initiating, directing and controlling lively discussion. In general, the lecture method of presentation was frowned upon except where factors beyond the control of the instructor made it practically unavoidable.

It was generally agreed that quizzes, problem assignments of various sorts and other devices should be frequently used, particularly in "first" courses in philosophy, whether these are specifically "introductory" or not, to enable the instructor to keep a careful check of the comprehension and progress of his students and to enable him to give or suggest special sorts of assistance to students discovered by these means to be having difficulty.

The use of technical terms and philosophic "jargon" should be watched carefully. Some participants went so far as to say that technical terms, the names of "great" philosophers and so on should be studiously avoided in "first" courses. Others thought this an extreme, infeasible and undesirable practice. It was pointed out, however, that such things should be introduced gradually and that every effort should be made to clarify in the minds of the students the meaning of terms and the fact that certain men are "great" in philosophy not because of who they are but because of the manner in which they clarified and developed certain problems and points of view. The consensus seemed to be that, if the "first" course was to develop any philosophical character, it was not only desirable but necessary to introduce technical terms and "great" names as well as "great" ideas and visions and "great" books.

An interesting suggestion grew out of a reported practice used by one member of the group. In order to show his students that philosophy is not an abstract and "ivory-tower" discipline, he brings various "specialists" representing other areas into his course. These persons present to and discuss with the student the philosophical questions and problems involved in the area of his special interest.



It was agreed that the techniques, tools, materials and specific methods will and should vary considerably from one institution and instructor to another. These recognized bases for variation did, however, underscore the necessity of first arriving at a clear sense of objectives.

### C. Content

The content of the "first" course is related principally to the character of the course, that is, whether it is specifically an "introductory" course, or a course in logic, ethics, or the history of philosophy, for example.

There was general agreement that the course should be "objective" rather than "subjective." There was, however, no clear agreement as to the meaning of these terms! Perhaps what was implied may best be suggested by the opinion that the problems of philosophy should receive first consideration, the special point of view, or systematic position of the instructor being made subsidiary to them.

There was considerable agreement that the content of the course should be organized systematically rather than discursively. Issues raised by this statement are reviewed in the preceding section on "Method" and need not be reiterated here.

The material dealt with should be handled in such a way that students come to appreciate the difference between philosophical problems and problems of other sorts which are more specifically related to other areas and discipline.

The content as well as the method of the course will be affected by the composition of the class, the maturity of the students, whether the course is required or elective, and similar matters.

The value of materials drawn from the field of literature whether in dramas, novels, essays or poetry, was frequently referred to as of great value in introductory courses. The same might be said with regard to certain materials which relate to the arts in other forms, to other humanistic studies, to natural sciences, and to the social studies. The amount and type of such material to be used is, of course, largely determined by the experience and interests of the instructor in the course.

Mention has been made above, in considering "Objectives," of the suggestion that an introduction course could profitably be conceived and organized as an "epitome" of the philosophy curriculum.

Where the method used is that implied by the phrase "student-centered," the content will, of course, be determined largely by the members of the class and may be expected to vary considerably from one year to another and even from one section to another. Because of this fact, courses organized on this basis should be taught by the most skillful teachers.

A suggestion that was of interest to a number of members of the group was that the first course should emphasize elementary readings rather than a systematic statement and consideration of "problems." In the case of the course referred to, the material first used is taken from current non-philosophical periodicals of various sorts, newspaper articles and editorials, certain radio programs, public addresses and discussions easily accessible to the students, and similar sources. These are studied in such a way as to bring out and focus attention upon the assumptions involved in them and the philosophic problems and points of view expressed by them. As the course proceeds, simple, interesting and readable selections and essays from the writings of certain philosophers are introduced. The content thus moves from a consideration of current issues, in which at least a minimum student interest is assumed, to a consideration of more definitely philosophical material. If the transition is to be made without "losing" the student, the instructor must exercise great care in the selection of material and have real skill in organizing and presenting it.

A suggestion that the content be made more "factual" and the reasons behind the suggestion has been mentioned above. The suggestion was generally rejected, at least in terms of reasons behind it. The slogan of the majority seemed to be "consider the student."



Various experiments have been made and some established practices were reported, for bringing instructors in other areas into the course for one or more meetings to introduce materials relevant to "specialized" areas as these are seen to be pertinent to the course plan.

The idea that the problem of the place of "value" in a world of "facts" should be central in introductory courses was made and rather favorably received. It at least indicates a preferential emphasis on certain content as desirable even though it may not be justified as an exclusive principle for the selection of material.

The above idea brought a reply to the effect that perhaps two introductory courses were needed: one of them to emphasize value problems; the other to emphasize methodological and "metaphysical" problems. Some "positivists" present took exception to this proposal!

In general, content, like method, is prescribed by the objectives of the course.

#### D. Level

The decision as to the level at which an introductory course is presented, irrespective of its subject matter--that is, whether ethics, logic and so on--bears directly and importantly on the matters of content, method and objectives of the course.

The practice of having an introductory course for freshmen is wide spread. There is considerable difference in the subject matter of such a course, however. In addition to introductory courses *per se*, logic, ethics and the history of philosophy were all defended as being the "best" place to begin.

Some members of the group expressed the opinion that freshmen were too immature to profit from work in philosophy. This brought a rejoinder that the assumption that the minds of younger persons are "weaker" is untenable.

It was almost universally agreed by the participants that the senior year is too late in the student's career to make a first course in philosophy of much value. There was, however, considerable agreement that the participation by teachers of philosophy in integrative courses at the senior level was valuable and should be encouraged.

Several persons reported that students in their institutions may enroll in their first course at the freshman, sophomore or junior level. In such cases the level of performance and difficulty of the material considered is increased with each year. The matter of relative difficulty is often harder to handle in such an arrangement than it is where a rather rigorous program of prerequisites is set up and enforced.

It was remarked by several persons that the level at which students should have their first experience with philosophy is likely to be effected by the degree to which "selective practices" are used and effective in recruiting students.

In general, it is fair to say that the group felt that the earlier students can be introduced to philosophy the better. However, the content and demands made on the students must be carefully graded at each level.

#### Summary

1. Compromise was rejected as a guiding principle. It has no meaning except in terms of a frame of reference accepted as valid. If the objectives of the course are carefully and realistically stated in terms of students and goals, they will not be a compromise, nor will they run the risk of being compromised. Rather they will reveal the degree to which the teacher understands the nature and function of his task.
2. Objectives should not be determined by outside sources whether examinations or available textbooks. This not only reverses the best practice but effectively takes responsibility for the course out of the hands of the teacher. If this happens, the



teacher tends to be a mere "robot." Examinations, syllabi, textbooks, and other materials, as well as methods should be determined by the objectives of the course and not vice versa.

3. An interesting and valuable instrument for the interchange of ideas about philosophy courses is available in The Philosopher's Newsletter, edited by Professor Willis Moore, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee.
4. There is not a universal agreement as to the need for or the desirability of a special "introductory" course in philosophy. Such a course is unnecessary provided the ends commonly served by this type of course can be realized by other means. However, the consensus of the group seemed to be that, in general, introductory courses of the sort which the name implies have a purpose which they well serve. They should not, perhaps, be the exclusive and required method of getting into philosophy. There seem to be a number of interesting experiments related to this problem going on in various institutions.
5. Perhaps the conclusion which was implied most clearly by the discussion, if not made articulate, was the continual need to reexamine the purport of courses in philosophy. This conclusion did not necessarily suggest morbid introspection nor a sense of the futility of philosophy, although, interestingly enough, both these attitudes were implicit or explicit in individual comments. Neither does it suggest the need to define the role of philosophy only with respect to its own "pure" content, or to the curriculum as an abstract framework of course offerings and requirements. Rather it emphasizes the place of the student in both the educational and philosophical enterprises and the resulting liberation of philosophy from the charge of practicalists and others that it inescapably involves "withdrawal" or "escape" to feed in cannibalistic fashion on its own kind and substance. Such re-examination of the objectives which give character to courses in philosophy acts to liberalize philosophy and the teacher of philosophy through a growing realization of the role of each and both with respect to all problems in their essentially humane aspects.



## SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP II ON INTRODUCTORY COURSES IN PHILOSOPHY

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Topics that arose in the morning lectures and in questions distributed to the discussion leaders were divided into eight headings, as follows: Aims and objectives, type of course, material used, texts and readings, teaching techniques, other aids, grading, and miscellaneous. The first, second, third, and fifth topics were discussed, lack of time preventing discussion of any others.

The most active discussion centered around the question of the extent to which the teacher's own philosophical conclusions should be urged upon the students. Professor Williams took the extreme stand in giving the affirmative view, and general opinion supported him, with the proviso that the teacher should make his own views known with no claim to finality or infallibility, encouraging students to subject them to as rigorous analysis as any other views considered and to reject them if they are unconvincing. The danger was recognized that some students may pretend to agree with the conclusions held by their teacher merely on grounds of supposed expediency or of the teacher's prestige or authority, particularly if the teacher fails to make explicit the principles and methods by which he reached his conclusions. But the opposite danger was also recognized, that without such presentation of definite conclusions the student might be left with the impression that philosophy is a mere verbal game which never answers the questions it asks.

There was general agreement on the desirability of a problem approach in the introductory courses and of emphasizing problems which have current reality for the student. One person wished to stress "multi-answer" problems, regarding which competent inquirers are in definite disagreement, and to treat the problems as methodological in character. Others felt that it is even more important to engage in critical analysis of apparently non-controversial, common sense assumptions and to create in the student the ability to do so; and there was general and vehement opposition to the methodological approach. In any case there was unanimous agreement on the importance of producing active philosophizing by the student through participation in class discussion. It was suggested that large classes be divided into smaller discussion groups in different parts of the same room for a part of the class period, to facilitate general participation. It was also suggested that a deliberately provocative statement by the teacher might sometimes be made for the purpose of arousing disagreement and bringing otherwise passive students into the discussion.

The group agreed that no distinction should be made in the introductory course between students planning to major in philosophy and other students. The suggestion was made that it might be better to concentrate on a small number of problems or of philosophical writings, and deal with them thoroughly, rather than to scatter attention more diffusely over a larger area. There was no dissent from the view that problems of existence, knowledge and value should all be covered in the introductory course.



## THE RELATION OF ETHICS TO THE SOCIAL AND POLICY SCIENCES

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Teachers of ethics find themselves in an unhappy dilemma. (1) If they try to work out the applications of their ethical standards, they venture into discussions requiring an enormous amount of information and they are likely to make fools of themselves. This suggests that the teacher of philosophy should protect himself by not attempting instruction in applied ethics. One is reminded of the recent publisher's blurb: "It is an element of the dignity of this work that its major effort has been to establish a principle rather than to work out in full its specific applications." (2) On the other hand, if the teacher of ethics does not attempt any applications, what he says will be unimportant in the opinion of the majority of American students and their advisors. This criticism of unapplied criticism has force, not only because ethics is presumably concerned with action, but also because much of the ethics instruction in American colleges today is given in the social and policy science departments.

In this dilemma I say with Dewey: Better to make mistakes than to maintain monistic impeccability.

What kind of courses in applied ethics will be important enough to be appreciated? In order to answer this question I propose to call your attention to the types of ethics instruction that are found outside of philosophy departments today.

First, the history of ethics is being taught as a part of cultural history. This is true of Social Science 2 at Harvard, Contemporary Civilization at Columbia, and Social Science I and III at the University of Chicago. Institutional history cannot be understood without some understanding of the views of Aristotle, and Kant. Ethical systems are, for these courses of study, the data of history; and, to some extent, they provide the organizing ideas.

Second, value theory and semantic analysis appear in the advanced courses in sociology and economics where the value premises of these supposedly descriptive sciences are treated. Gunnar Myrdal's expose of the hidden valuations in such descriptive terms as equilibrium and cultural lag is a sample of this kind of criticism. Howard Becker, Karl Mannheim, and Frank Knight are names that bring to mind other self-criticisms by the social sciences.

Third, the Basic Social Science course at the University of Minnesota is representative of instruction in many colleges where we find social problems or citizenship courses dealing with controversial areas of our life that call for some sort of legislation. These courses sometimes include instruction in ethics, meaning a kind of moral indoctrination with relatively little criticism of the standards that are employed by the instructor.

Finally, I would call attention to the policy sciences. Lasswell has defined the policy sciences (or arts, if you prefer,) as those studies which "clarify the process of policy making in society, or supply data needed for the making of rational judgments on policy questions."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, Power and Personality, New York: Norton, 1949. p. 120.



Among the policy sciences are many studies of administration such as public and personnel administration. These studies of administration are partly descriptive, but they also include deliberation upon some highly specialized problems of choice. Another group of policy sciences are those for the instruction of persons whose business it is to give counsel and guidance. In this group we find psychiatry, clinical psychology, social work, educational and vocational guidance, pastoral theology, and some parts of corporation law. Also in the policy sciences are education and educational psychology which in addition to their descriptive knowledge attempt evaluations of various kinds of teaching and learning.

It is my growing conviction that teachers of ethics can make their greatest contribution to the policy sciences. These studies are concerned with the most important choices that are being made in our civilization. The practitioners in these fields need the kind of criticism and clarification which philosophically-trained teachers are able to supply. I do not mean that most of us are today ready to make this contribution, but there is no difficulty standing in our way which cannot be overcome by hard work, and I am going to suggest the nature of some of that hard work.

First, if we are going to be of any assistance to policy analysts, we must familiarize ourselves with the context and vocabulary of their choices. If we are going to help the administrators, we must know what they are talking about when they refer to decision-making, budgeting, responsibility. If we are to make a contribution to personnel administration or to education, we must know something about their "rating scales" and "criteria." If we are concerned with clinical psychology or the various types of guidance, we need to understand what the clinicians mean by "adjustment," "disorganization," "abnormal," etc. These applied social science groups do not ordinarily begin their deliberations with remarks about the right and the good, but they are concerned with the right and the good under such labels as problem solving, therapy, the art of negotiation, human relations, good judgment, and the like.

Second, having familiarized ourselves with some field of applied social science we must practice due modesty and not attempt to make a deduction from some abstract philosophical principle to a particular case. As I suggested in the beginning, such an effort would probably result in our making fools of ourselves.

Third, we need to approach the various systems of ethics not with the idea of completely proving or disproving them. I strongly believe in the desirability of accurate expositions of the great historical systems of ethics, but the policy scientist is not initially interested in the question whether the Stoics proved that pleasure is not the good.

The value of the great ethical philosophies is not their questionable answers but their answers to questions which make deliberation more orderly. I think we undermine confidence in our own subject by successively setting up the conclusions of the various philosophers and then knocking them down completely and absolutely. A more restrained kind of criticism is called for, and I shall try to suggest why I believe this is true. From day to day deliberations are sometimes utilitarian, sometimes stoical, sometimes scholastic. The defect of deliberation is that men do not know when they are following the standards of one system rather than another, and as a result they cannot ask the critical questions which properly apply to any given type of ethical analysis.

I discovered some years ago that my classes in ethics were able to summarize the principal systems of ethics, but they were unable to analyze their own problems in the terms and with the standards and methods of these various systems. The students could tell me what Bentham said, but they could not make a Benthamite calculation. They could tell me what the casuists said, but they could not make a casuistical analysis of their own problems. They could tell me what Marx said, but most of them were clumsy at class-analyzing their own conflicts. When I made applications to such problems as personnel selection and public relations an integral part of the instruction, I found that there was more rapprochement with what was going on in the policy sciences and more discernment of the meaning of historical ethics. The relevance, for example, of Plato's Republic and the Platonic quest for completely general moral principles was brought home to one student by asking him to describe his own Utopia using the same approach that Plato used. This is what he said after a very difficult experience. "So long as my dream world



remained unspoken and unwritten, it retained all the idealistic and happy thoughts of a pipe dream. When asked, however, to make my ideas on the subject more articulate, I found to my surprise that I was contradicting myself right and left. In the end I saw either I did not really know what I wanted, or was hampered from saying everything by ideas of what other people would think, or would not have what I'd get even if I got it."

This may suggest that I am proposing a mushy eclecticism which finds insight in every system of ethics and disposes of none. I believe that all of the moral philosophies which we usually study contain some wisdom, but what I am suggesting is a redirection of ethical criticism. I do not believe, for example, that much is gained by a general condemnation of moral casuistry. In a society of larger and larger organizations our most important decisions and choices tend to be circumscribed by rules and policies which are set, we hope, by democratic legislation. One of the functions of the ethics teacher is to provide some instruction in the fine old art of casuistry. This art will certainly make a contribution to such activities as labor-management negotiations. Once the student has attained some facility in casuistry, however, he can appreciate the limitations of casuistry. For example, if company and union do not subscribe to some commonly accepted principles then the negotiations cannot be advanced by a casuistical application of rules. When casuistry fails, the type of moral problem-solving advocated by Dewey or maybe the point of view of Hobbes, Marx or Socrates will be in order. Different limitations will be recognized for the Socratic method. There are some types of choice to which the Socratic method is irrelevant. The same can be said for semantic analysis. The recognition of these limitations is part of the instruction in the art of deliberation and criticism. What I am saying is that we should teach the whole art of deliberation and criticism so that our students will learn how to make up their minds and determine actions more rationally.

Ethical criticism which is not a super-criticism of criticism but is related to the decision-making problems of today's professions is an integral part of the instruction in the policy sciences. Much of this instruction is inferior and could be improved by at least the collaboration of teachers trained in the history and analysis of ethics.

I have called attention to four types of ethical instruction in the college curriculum of 1949: first, the history of ethics as a part of cultural history; second, the criticism of the value premises of the social sciences; third, the social problems courses and their discussions of current controversy; and finally, the deliberative elements of the policy arts or sciences. As you may infer from the time and the emphasis that I have given to the last topic, I believe that rapprochement of ethics and the policy sciences is the most promising way of re-establishing ethics as an important part of the education of American youth.



## THE TEACHING OF FORMAL ETHICS

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The distinction between formal or theoretical study and application is sharper in some fields than in others - for example, sharper in logic than in medicine, or in physics than in law - but it is usually worth making. In ethics it is inevitable that theory use application for illustration and application presuppose or else light up the theory that it employs; yet the distinction is fairly clear. Applied ethics deals with the determination of the moral pattern, in general, or in special fields. It will decide for us, for example, where loyalty ranks among the virtues, whether the so-called welfare state is a desirable goal, why equality of human beings and the removal of discrimination is so central a moral task today, whether trial marriage among young people is worth considering as an alternative pattern of sex relations to that actually being discovered by Kinsey, whether journalism can seriously use the ideal of impartial truth or should adopt the frankly party press (as in France), what conflicts there are between service and profit as motifs in business enterprise, whether professors should resist the attempt to oust colleagues for political views, what moral responsibility America has for the industrialization of undeveloped areas in the world to-day, and so forth. In its general scope, applied ethics seeks to provide a system of certified or approved goals, character-traits, rules of conduct, ideals, standards, and procedures for the decision of individual cases falling under this moral pattern. (Note that individual case study or casuistry is only one part of the task of applied ethics, although it may as a matter of pedagogy or motivation call for the spotlight.)

Ethical theory has a somewhat different task. As pursued today, it has four approaches. One is analytic: starting from ethical terms or concepts (right, good, ought, duty, virtue, etc.) and their usage, it sets as its goal their clear analysis. In its operations it is aided by the tremendously expanded wisdom of contemporary logic and the theory of language. A second approach is descriptive: it attempts to describe as minutely and intimately as possible the phenomena and their qualities in what is ordinarily regarded as the moral phase of human life - conscience and the feelings of obligation, guilt, sympathy, the character of striving toward goals, the variety of the patterning of such phenomena. Its task is essentially scientific description, and it finds traditional literary and introspective materials expanded by psychological, psychiatric, comparative anthropological, religious, and historical study, whether the methods employed in these be behavioral description or phenomenological analysis. A third approach is causal: the examination of the conditions and the contexts - physiological, psychological, cultural, social and historical - in which moral phenomena and their specific patternings arise and are determined. Usually peripheral, this type of study has grown with the expansion of scientific and historical knowledge, and is now seen as the basis for whatever control may be possible in determining the outlines of moral phenomena; for example, the role of familial patterns or economic institutions in character development. A fourth approach is explicitly evaluative: it reveals increasingly the presence and scope of elements of selection in ethical theory itself and it makes such decisions. It is seen in such older queries as how far shall we trust the voice of conscience, or how high shall we place our ideals, in such recent views as Erich Fromm's that we should foster a humanitarian rather than an authoritarian conscience, and in general in attempts to work out criteria for evaluation of ideals, standards, virtues, goals, and other elements of a moral pattern.

With these preliminary distinctions, we may turn to the teaching of ethical theory and consider some of the fundamental problems under the customary rubrics of:

A. Objectives, B. Content, C. Methods, D. Techniques and Teaching Attitudes.



A. OBJECTIVES. Two objectives - which may be roughly termed vision and provision - seem central. The first is part of the general philosophical aim of understanding the world and man's place in it. It seeks to give the student a rounded picture of the ethical enterprise. It shows the reflective character of ethical theorizing, the grounding of moral phenomena in psychological and socio-historical process, and the constantly evaluative element in human life and thought. Thus the student will come to see the ethical phase of human life as a creative point in individual and social consciousness and activity. I do not pretend that there are no value components in this objective. Clearly, alternative objectives may be found in ethics teaching, e.g., to show the ethical enterprise as obedience to preexisting law, or as inevitably passive drift in uncontrollable currents. We are accustomed, I take it, to the fact that philosophical vision as outlook involves expressive, persuasive or practical components as well as recognition of fact. Part of the task in carrying out this objective is to distinguish the role of the components in vision.

By the objective of provision, I mean teaching ethical theory as a tooling process for the fields of moral application. This involves working out the criteria mentioned above (including problems of conflicts in criteria or competing sets) for evaluating moral rules and obligations, virtues, ideals, means, ends, standards, personal relationships, and so forth.

B. CONTENT. Insofar as topic-content is concerned, no departure seems to me to be required from the traditional ethical problems such as - if I may formulate them in the most traditional imprecise language - the discovery of the human good, the nature of obligation, the moral ideal, standards and methods of moral judgment, the relations of individual and society, the setting of moral phenomena in the wider relations of man, with the attendant problems of freedom and competing theories of "naturalization" or "spiritualization" of moral phenomena. While there has always been tremendous need for greater clarity in the analysis and formulation of these problems, they do, in the works of the great ethical treatises, have an essential continuity which has firm roots in the development of civilization and its successive problems. The growing interest in the history of ethics today will, I am confident, validate this belief. On the other hand, there are specific points of expansion and stress in the content of teaching ethical theory which I should like to propose.

1. A college course in ethical theory - for "courses" are the form our college teaching is likely to continue taking - should include to some extent all four approaches listed above: analytic, descriptive, causal, evaluative. If analysis is stressed at the expense of the rest, it may lead simply to the manipulation of ethical concepts in pretty language patterns. An over-concentration of description - especially where the work is limited to our own cultural tradition - tends to give an unduly privileged status to our particular types of obligation-phenomena (e.g., the prominent role of guilt-feeling). Comparative descriptive study will help remedy this, but we cannot stop short with simply discovering differing patterns. There is little danger that ethics teaching will overstress the causal approach (as history and sociology teaching sometimes does); the problem is rather to do fuller justice to this growing body of knowledge. Finally, evaluation in the sense of realizing that there is always a selective phase in ethical theory requires a greater explicitness; this can be achieved by regarding as an invariable part of the content of every problem dealt with, the criteria for determination or evaluation.

2. Close attention should be paid to analysis of ethical syntax and method in the light of modern logical theory and theory of science. This will lead to a reformulation of many traditional issues. For example, it is a cultural lag to speak loosely of moral axioms, as is still often done, on the style of Euclidean axioms, without taking into account the lessons of logical theory on the nature of mathematics. Similarly, the theory of definition is pertinent to modes of using ethical terms, and the theory of statement types to analysis of "moral laws."

3. There should be greater use of contemporary scientific materials in teaching ethics. Just as the older texts used to analyze concepts of "will" and "self" in terms of then current psychology, so teaching to-day must employ recent results. This is, in fact, forced upon us, if ethics is to hold the respect of the student. Why, for example, should he be concerned with the ethics teacher's analysis of conscience in the language of Butler, if he



is already acquiring in psychology courses the equipment of concepts of the id and the superego, and the clinical techniques for distinguishing neurotic guilt feeling from anxiety in the service of the reality principle? I suggest that not only can ethical theory be considerably enriched by coming to grips with contemporary scientific concepts, but that ethics teaching must find a place for the data and modes of interpretation of the psychological, anthropological, social and historical sciences. I do not believe that ethics teaching will thereby disintegrate into a human science survey; both the analytic and the evaluative approaches will continue to give it a distinctive character.

4. There should be a more intimate relation of content to the major moral sciences, especially law, politics, education. I do not mean that a course in ethical theory should work out applications in these fields, but that it should draw upon them for its understanding. For example, the interplay of norms and facts, and the creative role of decision, can be seen perhaps more clearly in legal process than in individual moral choice; and a theory of virtues acquires a fuller meaning by seeing how it would reorient educational processes.

C. METHODS. Four traditional methods may be distinguished. One is systematic; ethical theory is expounded as systematic theory, with division of problems, analysis of fundamental terms and methods, delineation of phenomena, etc. Texts often provide this framework. A second method is historical; it relies on readings in contrasting theories, e.g., Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Dewey, and extracts systematic answers from them. A third method is Socratic; starting with the welter of student beliefs it plays the midwife to more or less coherent ideas. A fourth method is inspirational; it draws upon fundamental feeling background in the students and plays upon their internal conflicts to crystallize a general value-outlook. Often it escapes being regarded as agitational only because it strengthens traditional and accepted values.

Which method may be stressed depends upon a variety of factors. One is size of class. It is impossible to Socratize 500 students at once; one can use Socratic illustration in the midst of systematic exposition. It may also be hard to avoid being pontifical in such a situation, with increasing reliance on inspirational methods. On the other hand, not to be Socratic in a small class is a waste of good opportunities. In any case, it seems to me that systematic method is indispensable as a goal, even though it be approached historically or Socratically. This is dictated by the objectives in teaching theory. It is also desirable that the student have some idea of historical conflicts or theoretical shifts, and that he experience the growth of ideas involved in the Socratic process. The inspirational does not seem to me to be a very desirable method; it may hinder the exercise of the critical or rational aspects of philosophical method. But it does call our attention to some important aspects of the teaching situation. The teacher has every right to hope that the student is being inspired by his contact with the materials and the philosophical situation. Thus it is desirable that student value-outlooks crystallize under the teacher as catalytic agent. The latter cannot, however, rightfully expect that the outlook will take the same specific form for all; for his task in ethical theory is not imposition of specific moral pattern. But he can hope to retain the sense of importance of the enterprise of ethical theory.

The role of practical materials and social problems in the methods of teaching ethical theory requires special consideration. No method, effectively employed, can dispense with their use. Their function is not merely illustrative. They constitute a body of materials to which reference is constantly made, and by means of which elements in the systematic theory are sharpened or tested. For example, can one seriously discuss criteria for evaluation of ideals without reference to the ideals men have in fact held dear, or methods of resolving ethical problems without regard to the issues men have faced? The fact that one may select among the ideals or issues and that formal ethics does not have the same immediate insistence on deciding the issues as applied ethics, does not mean that the actual problems of men are not a central point of reference. How best to select one's practical materials is a question of technique.

D. TECHNIQUES AND TEACHING ATTITUDES. Techniques are, of course, legion. They constitute a kind of armory from which appropriate weapons may be chosen for specific tasks. The choice depends upon the personality of the teacher, the psychological state of the specific class, the composition of the class (e.g., whether it has a fairly unified value-outlook or a set of sharply conflicting opinions), the state of the world and the country or



even the particular community, and so forth. For example, the teacher may decide to play up either conflicts or points of agreement. Thus even so simple a technique as a committee to investigate some aspect of a problem involves decision between including opposing outlooks to hammer out a unified report or having two unified committees, each presenting its own case. Similarly an overshadowing problem of the day - the imminence of war in 1940 or the cold war today or a long strike in a particular community - may be used as an organizing focus for ethical analysis of criteria. Often it will depend upon the personality of the teacher whether he can successfully employ a technique where emotions run high. Where he can, and ethical criteria are successfully illuminated, the result is probably better than where crucial present issues are avoided and the data dealt with in a more abstract fashion.

There is no reason why courses in ethical theory may not employ all the techniques to be found in courses in applied ethics. Thus one might use case study techniques, analogous to procedures in law schools, expositions of alternatives (historical, anthropological, utopian), illustration from literary and dramatic materials, and so forth. These can be used to illuminate ethical processes, methods and criteria, as well as specific moral patterns.

General attitudes in teaching ethical theory, on the other hand, seem to reflect more directly the value attitudes which are inherent in alternative ethical theories. For example, some teachers may stress the relation of theory to action, others the temporary aloofness of theoretical reflection or the neutrality of ethical analysis. Again, should ethical theory be taught as genuinely puzzling problems for individual preference in solution, or as, in part at least, accumulated human knowledge in the continual process of collective decision? Some formulations, such as the sharp separation sometimes found between "individual ethics" and "social ethics," seem to involve questions of technique, attitude, and content all together. Certainly there is considerable room for controversy as well as for varied experimentation on these matters in the teaching situation. The pooling of knowledge and experience will not merely extend the effectiveness of teaching; it may also pose fruitful problems for ethical theory itself.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP I  
ON THE TEACHING OF ETHICS

Charles D. Tenney

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The starting point for the seminar discussion of The Teaching of Ethics by Group I was vigorous criticism of the papers presented by Mr. Leys ("The Relation of Ethics to Social and Policy Sciences") and Mr. Edel ("The Teaching of Formal Ethics"). It was asserted from the floor that both men had in their papers displayed an overly pragmatic attitude and a fatal distrust of metaphysics, that they had dissolved ethics into other subjects such as psychology and sociology, that in sum their speeches showed an end to ethics. It was stated also that neither Mr. Leys nor Mr. Edel had brought into the forum the concept of freedom, and that the disappearance of this concept from discussions of ethics is plain evidence of the present-day swallowing-up of moral philosophy by natural philosophy. It was then urged that teachers of ethics should return with renewed emphasis to the concepts of freedom, value, creativity, and that they should devote class time to considering the metaphysical and religious bases of values.

This suggestion elicited a counter-suggestion: the autonomy of ethics is no less endangered by attempts to absorb it into metaphysics than by attempts to reduce it to psychological and sociological data. The values of ethics, being absolute, should be studied by and for themselves, first as deductions, then in their applications.

At this point the discussion became an old-fashioned debate between ethical relativists and ethical absolutists, both of whom are still very much with us. Much heat was generated by the friction of opposites, but finally the disputants came back to the chief point at issue, the teaching of ethics. Even this return to the main topic, however, was colored by the flames of the old controversy. It was successively maintained (a) that both absolutism and relativism should be taught impartially, leaving the student free to choose between them, (b) that the students should be taught that there are absolute values, that these values are difficult to discover, but that some methods of discovering them are better than others, (c) that through discussion of actual moral situations the students should be led to generalize for themselves, and (d) that students should be encouraged to seek guidance from the classical moralists.

Mention of the classics led to discussion of a practical point of pedagogy -- what literature to use in the ethics course, and how best to provide it. One suggestion was that a number of the classics can now be obtained in inexpensive editions, another was that anthologies such as Rand's Classical Moralists and Clark and Smith's Readings in Ethics are fairly satisfactory sources of readings, still another was that for beginning students books like Ziemer's Education for Death, Kravchenko's I Chose Freedom, and Steffens' Autobiography are stimulating.

Mr. Leys, who was present, was then asked to reply to his critics. He presented a modest program for the ethics teacher: helping the student to attain reasoned choices, "the best choice that I with my background, knowledge, and opportunities can make." He pointed out that solving some problems by the attainment of reasoned choices leaves fewer problems to be settled by force. The teacher should assume the role of a non-partisan referee, a reconciler of differences.

In the end, no very definite conclusions were reached, largely because the unrelenting conflict between ethical absolutists and ethical relativists made agreements both on the contents of the ethics course and on teaching methods difficult. The fear that ethics is obsolete, at least as an autonomous subject of study, also hung over the discussion. But the very vigor with which the participants in the seminar maintained their respective positions, as well as their interest in the suggestions advanced about readings and other teaching devices, show that ethics has lost none of its liveliness.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP II  
ON THE TEACHING OF ETHICS

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The chairman suggested that the discussion on the teaching of ethics center around three main questions. The questions recommended were:

1. What should be the objectives of a course in ethics?
2. What should be the content of a course in ethics?
3. What method should be employed in the teaching of ethics?

It was observed that these questions are related in the sense that answers proposed for the first might well determine the position taken with respect to the second and third. Clearly the objectives one sets up for a course in ethics will influence the development of the study, both as to content and as to method. Thus an examination of the aims and objectives of such a course will answer by implication, at least, the question as to content and method.

It is presumed that the formulation of objectives for a course in ethics will depend upon student personnel. One must consider whether the study is a first course in philosophy, or an offering for students who are already acquainted with the field. Furthermore, the formulation of objectives will depend upon the academic status of the students concerned (major or non-major). It should be possible, however, to develop a minimum set of objectives for a course in which the students are both majors and non-majors, and where the course represents an initial introduction to philosophy. The following objectives were considered and the discussion of each is summarized as follows:

1. To make students more moral

A first course in ethics should encourage students to conduct themselves in accordance with accepted moral principles - to make students more moral. It was objected that this is an overly ambitious aim for one course in philosophy. Moreover, if the aim is to make students more moral, then the distinction between majors and non-majors should be disregarded. There is no reason to believe that philosophy majors should lead more moral lives than non-majors. Though this was criticized as a primary objective, it was agreed that it should be a minor aim.

2. To tell the truth about ethics

Statement of this objective raises the obvious question: "What is the truth about ethics?" A variety of answers to this question does not invalidate the objective itself, for the specific aims are to state the universal principles of ethics and develop their implications. It was suggested that a development of the implications of ethical principles could be realized most effectively through Socratic dialectic. Question was raised whether the broad objective is best achieved through emphasis on reflective thinking about conduct, or conformity to the traditions and mores of the social group. This leads to the distinction between theoretical and applied ethics and is discussed at more length in relation to other objectives.

3. To make students lead better lives

It appears that this objective is essentially the same as #1, for the "better life" is interpreted as the "moral life"; therefore, criticisms of the first objective will apply against this one.



4. To raise questions about moral conflicts, to clarify ethical problems, and to analyze various solutions to these problems

The objectives of a course in ethics are to make the student aware of the urgency of moral conflicts that demand resolution, to formulate the problems engendered by the conflicts in such a way as to clarify the issues involved, and to present and analyze some of the solutions advanced by classical philosophers. In each case the emphasis should be on the practical carry-over of the principles and methods of approach in order that the student might be in a position to resolve moral conflicts through reflective thought.

5. To present a basis for making a decision in cases of moral conflict

One important objective of a course in ethics is to provide a methodology for coping with moral conflicts. A specific aim is to state valid principles of reasoning and show how they are correctly applied to moral problems. The recurring emphasis on the practical carry-over of a course in ethics leads to the suggestion that there be two courses -- the one, a course in theory of morality, the other, a course in applied morality. The first would be directed toward a discussion of the criteria for evaluating ideals. The second would be a descriptive account of the moral pattern that is in fact followed, and one of its primary aims would be to determine the applications of such a standard or pattern to human behavior. The aim of neither course is to make the student more moral, but to suggest methods and techniques the student might employ in the resolution of moral conflicts. From either point of view there emerges a common objective: to provide conditions for moral growth.

Critics of this objective question whether the aim is to analyze the process of making moral decisions, or to determine how moral decisions ought to be made. "Should ethics be approached as a descriptive science, or as a normative science?" but it must be emphasized that it has a certain practical value in resolving problems.

6. To effect an analysis of ends and goods

Here the aim is to develop an understanding of an appreciation for the values of diverse cultural groups. Two approaches were suggested: (1) a comparative study of the moral patterns of various cultural groups and an analysis of the value problems involved, and (2) an analysis of conflicting moral patterns within a given culture.

An example of the latter approach is the course entitled Business Ethics offered at Kent State University. This is an advanced course in which the standards and norms examined are regarded as working principles and hypotheses and are analyzed for their implications. It is a course in applied ethics, but the theoretical questions necessarily follow, e.g., intrinsic vs. extrinsic values, and the status of the principles examined (empirical or a priori).

In conclusion, what should be included in this minimum set of objectives for a course in ethics? As a study in ethics it should attempt to provide conditions for moral growth. As a first course in philosophy it should attempt to develop in the student the habit of thinking critically and reflectively about problems. Both of these objectives are eminently practical, and it appears that they are to be realized most effectively through a study of theories of morality with emphasis on the relevance of the theories to current moral conflicts. Ethics is specifically a normative discipline, and the question is not "What is called right?" but "What is right?", not "How are moral decisions made?" but "How ought moral decisions to be made?"

7. It was finally discussed in how far the teacher in ethics should apply ethical rules to everyday problems. Some felt -- in particular Professor Blanchard -- he should stay within the realm of theory where alone he was fully competent. Others argued he should stray into practical realms for he is competent, as a citizen at least, in a great variety of practical fields.



## THE TEACHING OF LOGIC

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What should be the purpose of an undergraduate course in logic? A common answer is that the goal of such a course is to teach students "how to think." The position maintained in the present paper reflects the more modest view that a logic course should serve to introduce students to some principles and rules of formal deductive inference.

The notion that logic imparts an ability to "think" is a flattering conception of the subject widely held by laymen, many of whom believe that logic celebrates intellectual mysteries, the arcane rituals of which have a beneficial effect on one's reasoning ability. Nor is this view restricted to laymen. In a somewhat less exaggerated form, it is held by many teachers of logic. Of course, it may be true that a semester of logic can teach one "how to think," but this claim could also be made for a semester of mathematics or of English composition. Logic is indeed a valuable discipline, but insistence on its peculiar ability to communicate skill in "thinking" does not seem easily defensible, particularly when one considers the miscellaneous elements that compose most college courses in logic.

The average undergraduate course in logic is a melange of formal and non-formal ingredients, the juxtaposition of which is of questionable scientific or pedagogic value. The formal element usually consists of the traditional doctrine of the proposition and syllogism. The non-formal factors ordinarily include (1) words - their ambiguities, their affective or informative character, etc. (2) the "fallacies", (3) "Induction" and "Scientific Method." Until quite recently, most logic texts supported this pattern. Thus presented, the undergraduate logic course tends to become a ragbag in which the study of utterly different kinds of inference is mixed in with matter which is not concerned with inference at all, but is rather, rhetorical or semantic in nature.

Consider the section of the course in which the logic teacher discourses on words, their abstractness, multiple meanings, emotional fringes, and the like - with appropriate reference to popular books like Chase's Tyranny of Words or Hayakawa's Language in Action. This material is not only non-formal; it has nothing directly to do with inference at all. A large part of it is polemic rather than scientific in character and would more fittingly be treated under some other subject such as "Semantics" or "Argumentation," rather than in association with the study of necessary and formal inference - which the present writer takes to be the only subject matter appropriate to a semester logic course which pretends to any integration and unity.

The survival of the non-formal fallacies in logic courses is evidence of the logic teacher's reluctance to detach matters of rhetoric or argumentation from the formal and exact elements in his course. Not only are the classical fallacies concerned with non-formal matters; in teaching them, there is nearly always a large measure of attention given to arguments which are trivial and silly. It is difficult to see why American undergraduates should be solemnly warned against the pitfalls in arguments like "Peter was an apostle; the apostles were twelve men; therefore, Peter was twelve men." The present writer recalls that his seventh grade teacher in English grammar not only competently explained the fallacy of "Amphiboly," but also that her illustrations were rather more amusing than many of those current in college lecture rooms today. It is certainly agreeable to know what is meant by petitio principii and ignoratio elenchi, but what pass in logic courses for "material fallacies" are very often not fallacies at all, but quite respectable arguments. For example, everyone agrees that it is fallacious to advance as an argument something that has nothing to do with the point at issue. But logic can give no rules



for determining what is relevant. In certain contexts, a man's color, religion, or personal character may be quite pertinent to the issue.

More serious consideration should be given to arguments for inclusion in a semester logic course of the topics "Induction" and "Scientific Method." For all his genius, John Stuart Mill performed a questionable service for the pedagogy of logic in binding his exposition of induction and methodology of science within the same set of covers as the traditional logic of the syllogism. For ever since Mill, logic texts have reproduced this pattern with so little variation that even today few logic teachers have the hardihood to break away from the stereotyped deduction-induction formula.

If the boundaries of logic are defined as including the study of all valid inference, then "induction" and "scientific method" must fall within its terrain. But there are good reasons to support the contention that such a definition of logic is far too generic. Questions concerning induction and scientific method are so involved with attitudes concerning the behavior of nature (and thus with a philosophy of nature or metaphysics) that the value of any attempt to treat them systematically together with the principles of formal inference is dubious. The inability of Mill's "Methods" to stand up under analysis as genuine canons of discovery or proof of particular causal patterns in nature is just one instance of the failure of scientific methodology to provide formal rules of inference where the behavior of the empirical world is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the essential difference between formal and empirical inference, it is not surprising that the sections on induction and scientific method in many college logic courses (and texts) fail to cohere with the sections on formal elements. This should not be taken to mean that the realm of scientific methodology is not an important field of research, but rather that discourse about this field had better be completely separated from that of formal logic. Alfred Tarski's comments on the inapplicability of logical concepts and methods to scientific methodology are valuable:

It is at least possible that this situation is not merely a consequence of the present stage of methodological researches. It arises, perhaps, from the circumstance that, for the purpose of an adequate methodological treatment, an empirical science may have to be considered not merely as a scientific theory - that is, as a system of asserted statements arranged according to certain rules - but rather as a complex consisting partly of such statements and partly of human activities. It should be added that in striking opposition to the high development of the empirical sciences themselves, the methodology of these sciences can hardly boast of comparable definite achievements - despite the great efforts that have been made. Even the preliminary task of clarifying the concepts involved in this domain has not yet been carried out in a satisfactory way. Consequently, a course in the methodology of empirical sciences must have quite a different character from one in logic and must be largely confined to evaluations and criticisms of tentative gropings and unsuccessful efforts. For these and other reasons, I see little rational justification for combining the discussion of logic and the methodology of empirical sciences in the same college course.<sup>2</sup>

If we take the concern of logic to be formal deductive inference, then modern extended or "symbolic" logic should form the larger part, if not the whole, of a first course in logic. The revolutionary growth and development of logic in the twentieth century presents the teacher of the subject with a rich stock of material of first-rank scientific importance together with a pedagogic challenge as to means of exploiting the material. It is difficult

<sup>1</sup> An excellent criticism of Mill's "Methods" is given in Cohen and Nagel's Logic and Scientific Method. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1934, Ch. XIV, without claiming, however, that the behavior of nature is not a particular concern of the logician.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction of Logic and to the Methodology of Deductive Sciences. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941. pp. XIII - XIV.



for the teacher of logic today to afford anything but the most positive of attitudes toward the extended logic of our own time. The new frontiers to which logic has pushed in the present century and the consequent prestige now enjoyed in contemporary scientific circles by a subject of study not long ago considered by many as hardly more than an academic fossil places a responsibility on the logic teacher that can no longer be evaded.

There are many teachers of logic in American colleges today who do not present the contemporary extended treatment of the subject. Some of them seem to regard symbolic logic as an affair of complex and Byzantine trivialities. Others, who stress the "practical application" of logic insist that in their presentations of the traditional material they have found extensive examination of the new logic to be superfluous. One professor, describing the logic course he teaches at a State University, says of it:

Symbolism is referred to in passing, in order to acquaint the student with the various types of symbolism used in some courses of logic. But so far as actual class work is concerned, absolutely no symbolism is used, because it was found that valuable time which could be utilized for drill was wasted, and because the symbols took the students a step farther away from the actual functional use of their logic in everyday critical discussion. The time saved by the elimination of symbolism is spent on making each student explain in ordinary everyday non-logical terms the reasoning processes which make an argument valid or invalid.<sup>1</sup>

The same professor, a champion of the categorical syllogism, defends "an assumption that every college graduate needs to have a minimum basic skill in the processes of reasoning and that this skill could be taught in a course of logic."<sup>2</sup> Now, if presentation of the traditional syllogistic doctrine does indeed communicate skill in reasoning, it is difficult to see why presentation and exercise in modern logical material - far wider in scope, yet exceeding the classical system in rigor and precision - should be considered as time wasted. Any statement to the effect that logic can teach students "how to reason" is open to question if only on the issue of the meaning of the sentence. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that one admits that training in classical logic may increase one's reasoning skill. It would seem to follow a fortiori that modern extended logic, which includes the processes from which the operations of the classical logic may be derived, should increase it further.

It cannot be denied that certain difficulties attend the teaching of symbolic logic. Good texts, simple enough for students to follow under direction, are not widely available at present. Moreover, unless the instructor is a specialist in the subject, he must work hard to master the material. In addition, he must devise ways for effective presentation of the subject, adjusting the material to the capacities of his students, tempering mathematical winds to the shorn lamb. Once these are achieved, however, the rewards are great. The teacher loses his "bad conscience" toward contemporary logic, and acquires a new sense of intellectual security. Students quickly respond to competent presentation of the material. A good teacher can make capital of their natural eagerness to be well informed of the modern and revolutionary aspects of a science. As for the difficulty of the subject - it is not likely that learning the elements of modern logic will cause the student appreciably more trouble than will the complexities of the syllogism.

Of course, there is always the student who will raise the question, to the accompaniment of solemn nods of approval from the class, "But what use is all this symbolic logic? What good will it do anyone?" A teacher who has justified logic to his class on grounds of "practical application to daily living," may find himself embarrassed by the challenge. Qui nimis probat nihil probat. But a logic instructor who has never oversold his subject with the claim that it will bake bread, but rather teaches it as an end in itself - the study

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Melzer, "Functional Logic," Journal of Higher Education, (March 1949), p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 143.



of the principles and basic operations of formal deductive inference - will have little difficulty handling the question. "But this makes logic just theory." Is its stature therefore lessened? Rather than a source of embarrassment, the challenge of "theory" would seem an admirable pedagogic opportunity to point out how often research on the highest levels of science is "just theory," and that, if practical applications of these theoretical enterprises turn up, *tant mieux!* Educational psychologists say that student learning must be adequately "motivated." Granting this, must the "motivation" where the teaching of logic is concerned be the Sophist's promise of winning a case in the law courts?

The question of the role the classical doctrine of proposition and syllogism should play in a first course in logic is an interesting one. Tarski would exclude it almost totally. Others, such as Cooley<sup>1</sup> and the Lazerowitzes<sup>2</sup>, present the traditional material subsequent to their expositions of the modern system to show that the older material can be accommodated in symbolic notation within the larger framework of the extended logic. Other teachers, who prefer the historical sequence, have found that they can present the essentials of the traditional material effectively in a time much shorter than was once deemed necessary, and have sufficient time ahead for the presentation of the elements of modern logic. Whatever the order of exposition, it seems to the present writer that familiarity on the part of students with the essentials of the traditional doctrine is not undesirable. Not just because it is pleasant to know what Bertrand Russell means when he speaks of a syllogism in Barbara. The system of the syllogism - unlike much other material that has come to be included in the teaching of traditional logic - is a formal deductive system and, as such, not irrelevant to an exposition of the principles of formal inference. Moreover, taking account of the classical system helps the student to see that it is not a different logic, but rather the first - and up until quite recent times the only - successful attempt to construct a formal deductive system of inference. That the classical syllogistic doctrine is far more limited as well as more awkward than its modern successor does not appear to the present writer to have destroyed all its pedagogic value in the present not wholly stable stage of the development of logic.

A difficulty remains. If the logic teacher succeeds in packing a good exposition of contemporary and classical formal elements into a semester undergraduate course in logic, it is obvious that he will have little opportunity to deal with many non-formal elements which have been associated with logic. From the point of view of this paper, so much the better. But many of the non-formal topics are of considerable interest both historically and systematically. It is regrettable that students should miss discussion of topics like induction and scientific method, or certain problems raised by consideration of words and names, or even the "fallacies." But unless the logic teacher has a second "Non-Formal" semester at his disposal, it is hard to suggest a solution to this difficulty which does not compromise the unity of the course.

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Cooley, A Primer of Formal Logic, New York: Macmillan, 1942, Ch. VIII.

<sup>2</sup> A. Ambrose and M. Lazerowitz, Fundamentals of Symbolic Logic. New York: Rinehart, 1948, Chaps. X, XI.



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Elementary logic as the study of the principles and conditions of correct thinking can make a contribution to critical thinking unequaled by any course in the curriculum, and I should like to see the course aimed at making this contribution for as large a proportion of the students as possible. In too many cases the teacher is more concerned about what his colleagues elsewhere will think of what he is doing or how his students will fare in more advanced courses than he is about the needs of the general student; but if he does a capable job of looking after the latter, I do not think he need have many fears regarding the former. It seems to me a mistake, for two reasons, to plan the beginning course in logic primarily for those who will be taking further courses in it rather than for the general student. In the first place, a very small proportion of the student body will ever take advanced work in the subject; but if their number is sufficiently large, a second course can be added to further prepare them for advanced work. And secondly, there are more basic needs of the general student to consider. If teachers of logic do not attempt to meet these needs, others perhaps less adequately prepared to do so will.

In a democracy it is important that as large a proportion of the population as possible be able to think critically. Not merely the expert in logic and the various special fields but the general citizen must make decisions which might be reached more intelligently on the basis of some training in logic. For example, he should be able to examine the material presented to him through newspapers, radio, personal observation, and other sources, and understand what it says or implies, as well as the assumptions back of it. He should be able to weigh the reliability of this material, determine what it is evidence for, and see how strong a case it makes for a given conclusion. He should also learn to detect fallacies in his own reasoning as well as in that of others.

The attainment of such objectives, however, does not seem to me to be something which comes more or less automatically with the completion of a logic course. I am convinced that you have to teach explicitly for these ends if you are to get the best results. No logic course, moreover, will be able to guarantee straight thinking on the part of every student taking it; but through pointing out some of the main sources of error and familiarizing the student with acceptable principles of reasoning, significant improvement in critical thinking may be made.

There are, I think, a great many ways of achieving the objectives which I have outlined in terms of the needs of the general citizen; and experimentation is needed to determine which techniques will work out best for a given school. Fruitful experimentation along these lines would be greatly furthered, moreover, by the development of some good, relatively short standard tests of logical reasoning--a project to which I should be happy to see the teachers of logic devote some effort. The tests should be ones which would measure logical reasoning rather than general intelligence or amount of information and should be formulated in language intelligible to the person who has never had a course in logic. The Watson-Glaser Tests of Critical Thinking are among the best with which I am acquainted, but they are too long and even with their length omit a few things I should like to see included; for example, material fallacies seem to me to be slighted in them.

Turning now, however, to the content of elementary logic as the study of the principles and conditions of correct thinking, I should like to outline a general procedure which I have found helpful in teaching this course to freshmen and sophomores. In anonymous type-written critical comments called for during the last week of the course, the students have spoken quite favorably of my plan of spending the first week or ten days in sketching the general background of our study and in outlining the problems we are to consider during the semester. They like to know at the outset that our major objectives are finding means



of removing or avoiding error and prejudice and studying the principles which must be observed if thinking is to attain trustworthy conclusions; and they say that this preview gives them a clearer idea of the reasons for various types of drill work we do--for example, why we spend time on immediate inference or on distribution of terms. They will do a great deal of hard work without complaint if the particular assignments seem to fit into the general program of helping them learn to detect and avoid fallacies. I have found Dewey's five steps in a complete act of reflective thinking a convenient device for suggesting to them the organization of the course as a whole. Everything from the syllogism to the various inductive methods can be given a place in this framework of problem-solving activities.

The four main sets of problems in the course are: (1) the major sources of error and the role of prejudice and bias in our thinking; (2) the nature of clear and accurate statement of ideas; (3) the nature of inference; and (4) the chief ways of obtaining information. In connection with the first set, it may be noted that thinking which is to arrive at trustworthy beliefs or solutions for problems must be guided by relevant facts and reasons rather than by such other factors as habits, wishes, and recently or vividly experienced events. The fact of prejudice or bias helps explain how it is that much of our thinking is guided by something other than the relevant factors, and it is difficult to over-estimate its importance for such matters as what we take to be problems, the direction we look for solutions, the kinds of evidence we accept as proof, and the language we use to tell others about these things. If the student is to have not merely knowledge of logic but skill in applying it in detecting or avoiding errors, some understanding of prejudice seems essential; and, in particular, he must be led to see the possibility that not merely his political opponents or his rivals in some line but he himself may be prejudiced. To help bring this about, I usually have my elementary logic students devote their first major paper to an analysis of one specific prejudice of their own in terms of its causes and supports and the procedure they recommend for getting rid of such a prejudice.

The problems involved in clear and accurate statement of ideas are also of pervasive importance. To check on the validity of arguments or the truth of hypotheses, we must understand them, and understanding them is greatly aided by having them formulated in clear and unambiguous terms. Here we can use all the aid we can get from teachers of composition and rhetoric and communications courses, and cooperative programs may be worked out for the mutual advantage of the teachers and students concerned. (At Washington University some work has been done along this line by some of my colleagues in the Basic College courses.) In attempting to teach the student to comprehend and use language with accuracy, clarity, and discrimination, we can study terms and their uses, classification and division, definition, propositions, putting sentences in the proper logical form, and various functions of language. The study of immediate inference also, it seems to me derives some of its chief value from its helpfulness in this connection. If the function of this part of the course is kept clearly before the student and the material streamlined accordingly by the instructor, I think it will be possible to maintain interest in what many regard as pretty dull going. The student always seems to appreciate having the significance of this material for some concrete, contemporary issue pointed out.

The deductive phase of Dewey's five steps brings to the fore a third set of problems concerned with immediate inference, syllogistic reasoning, and material fallacies. Here are raised the familiar questions--How do we determine the implications of a proposition? How do we recognize the existence (or non-existence) of logical relationships between propositions? How do we ascertain whether two statements say the same thing, are consistent, or contradict each other? How do we pass from the truth or falsity of one statement to the truth or falsity of another? How do we determine whether one statement affords evidence for or against another? How do we decide whether a statement is proved or disproved or rendered probable or improbable by a given body of evidence? How do we pass from two or more statements to a third? In discussing these questions in the elementary course, ordinarily I do not include symbolic logic.

In immediate inference I take up the relations of opposition and obversion and conversion, not troubling the students to learn the names for contraposition and inversion. Though I should like my students to see that "All non-P is non-S" is another way of saying "All S is P," I do not insist on their knowing that the former is the full contrapositive of the latter. A mastery of the basic forms of immediate inference makes for a clearer understand-



ing of the meaning of propositions and helps the student restate propositions in the proper form for syllogistic reasoning.

It does not take long to teach the student the rules of the syllogism, and if you set up the arguments in good syllogistic form for him, soon he will have little difficulty in saying whether they are valid or invalid and why; but since most of the arguments to which he will have to apply his knowledge of logic after leaving the course will not be set up for him, he ought to learn how to set them up himself. It does not matter particularly whether he knows which premise comes first or what figure of the syllogism is involved, but he must be able to tell what the conclusion is and what premises are offered in support of it; and many of my remedial students at least have had a difficult time deciding this with relatively simple arguments, such as the following in which the conclusion does not come last: "Susie is undoubtedly worried about her looks, for she reads the beauty advertisements and only individuals reading them are worried about their looks." Hence I usually put the primary emphasis on giving my students practice in analyzing ordinary arguments and restating them in syllogistic form.

Material fallacies seem to me to deserve more attention than they are sometimes given. So much of the language of ordinary persuasion--political campaigns, advertisements, and propaganda programs of various sorts--is shot through and through with them that the student who would master the art of straight thinking must learn to detect them. Learning to find and analyze instances of the major material fallacies, moreover, opens up a new dimension of critical armament for the student, for it is possible to analyze many arguments with ease and show their invalidity in terms of the material fallacies without having to reduce them to syllogistic form. I usually assign my students a paper on this topic, having them give examples of five different types of fallacious arguments taken from advertisements, campaign speeches, editorials, or the like occurring after the beginning of the current semester. Since more than one fallacy may be found in a given example, I ask them to state the argument in its own terms, then give its logical form, and finally analyze the fallacy found in the argument as thus stated. The students usually find this one of the high points of the semester.

Gathering the information necessary to clarify problems and verify hypotheses raises the fourth main cluster of problems. In this connection we make a study of the various inductive methods involved in obtaining information through observation, testimony (written or oral), and experimentation. We consider the limitations and main sources of error of each of these ways of getting information, along with the conditions of acquiring trustworthy results. Because of the pressure for time, much of this material, particularly on observation and testimony, is left to the students to read on their own while I am working with them in class on some points in deduction. By giving them various exercises on written sources and dishonest propaganda and allowing some class time for answering questions on the material, this procedure works very well. For example, the analysis of a foreign news item one-half column or more in length leads them to examine the difficulties reporters and news agencies have to overcome to give them accurate information, shows them how to recognize and use the clues to proper interpretation given them by a good reporter, and helps teach them to evaluate the trustworthiness of such information. The material on experimentation requires at least two weeks of class time.

A few other pedagogical devices I have found helpful are: (1) a good many exercises and papers (in their critical comments students admit that though they may have griped at the time about doing them, they think that much of the value of the course is due to these papers and exercises and that they should be retained), (2) fairly frequent quizzes (five or six in addition to the final), and (3) use of sample quizzes.

In conclusion, then, it seems to me possible to make a substantial contribution to critical thinking through a study of prejudice and the major sources of error and of the difficulties involved in stating our ideas clearly and unambiguously, in reaching conclusions, and in obtaining the information necessary to formulate our basic premises or verify our hypotheses. I hope it is clear that elementary logic as remedial and functional does not mean the substitution of a snap course for the traditional logic but rather restating the latter to emphasize its value for the general citizen and help make it a more useful tool for intelligent use by him. Such a course, I think, may be taken with profit by the student who goes on in the field; but its chief significance lies in the fact that it helps bring the values of logic to many more students than are likely otherwise to become acquainted with them.



## THE FIRST COURSE IN LOGIC

Lionel Ruby

Roosevelt College, Chicago

The previous speakers have rejected the traditional type of logic course. One attack (Mr. Brennan's) comes from "the right," from the aristocratic tradition; the other, Mr. Hahn's, comes from the more democratic left. The directions indicated here are pedagogical, not political signposts. I agree with Mr. Hahn that logic students must be spoon-fed, at least for a short period. Speaking only for the Mid-West, we have large classes in which a great many students act very obtusely when first confronted with abstractions. Their presence in logic classes may be blamed on Horace Mann or on Public Law 346; but they are with us, and God must love them, and we must teach them logic.

But I believe that the pabulum period should serve the purpose of giving a base for more rigorous work, and I would wish to go much further than Mr. Hahn in developing the more technical phases of formal logic in a one-semester course. Students also have to graduate while still comparatively young, and they may have time for only one course in logic. If so, then both Mr. Brennan and Mr. Hahn attempt too little, though in different ways.

I also agree with Mr. Hahn in conceiving of the first course in logic as a course which aims at making the student more sophisticated in the intellectual enterprises in which living involves him. The course should be treated as a necessary part of a liberal education. It may help in transforming intellectual children into intellectual adults. It will of course not teach students how to think unless they already know how to think. At Roosevelt College, a prerequisite for logic is required: logic students must have an average grade of "C" for admittance, since a minimum of logical ability is required in order in order to read the text and to understand the logical explanations of the book and instructor. But logic can help to improve a student's general habits of reasoning. He will become conscious of what it means to say that an argument is valid or invalid, and he will be able to demonstrate his meaning in many cases. He may occasionally ask himself if he has proved his point, or if others have proved theirs. He should know what he means when he says that a proposition is true, or an event probable, or that  $x$  is the cause of  $y$ . He will know the importance of evidence, and he will perhaps be less gullible with respect to arguments based on flimsy evidence, especially when he dislikes the conclusions which are presented. He may even ask some of his teachers in the social sciences how they know the patterns of cultures. He may be more critical of the claims of pseudo-scientists and propagandists. He will be more aware of the limitation of language and of the pitfalls into which language may lead us, and he may become impressed with the significance of the rational approach to human affairs. He will be less likely to disparage the appeal to evidence on the ground that "logic is irrelevant since man is not a rational animal," and he may be less likely to affirm that mysticism or intuition or some other non-rational approach can give us a truth which is superior either to formal or empirical truth. He may also know the difference between the psychological analysis of thinking and the logic of reasoning. He should learn to say that he is doubtful when the evidence is inconclusive and learn also the difficult art of suspending his judgment. These things may be taught in other courses too, and they may be taught better in some, but the logic course can specialize in teaching these things. One of the recurring laments in contemporary discussions of higher education is that it fails to teach the student "critical-mindedness"; in logic we can concentrate on this job.



There are many practical values in logic when it is conceived of as part of liberal education. But the logic course is also more than this. It is also a form of disinterested inquiry into the forms of rational discourse, and the contemplation of these forms should give the student an enjoyment which is pure and unalloyed. Intellectual analysis can also be a great deal of fun, and no course should be more enjoyable, either for the student or teacher, than logic.

I shall now describe a specific logic course, the course given at Roosevelt College. Perhaps the merits or weaknesses of this course may present a point of departure for working out an adequate course of the more traditional type. The Roosevelt course is divided into three parts; Semantics, Deductive Logic, and Scientific Methods. The approximate time allotted to these divisions is three weeks to semantics, eight weeks to deduction, and five to scientific methods. In a sixteen week semester, exclusive of the final examination weeks, this arrangement allocates about twenty per cent to semantics, fifty per cent to deduction, and thirty per cent to the last part.

The general aim of the semantics portion is to make the student aware of the nature of language as an instrument of thinking. It emphasizes the arbitrary or conventional relation between words and their referents; the linguistic difficulties which arise from the ambiguity of words and the failures to stipulate the meanings of such words; the differences between real and merely apparent disputes, with special reference to verbal disagreements; the problems of definition; and the different functions of language as directive, expressive and informative. The semantics section is regarded as a propaedeutic to logical analysis, since the sophisticated thinker must know what his words mean before he can discuss the validity of an argument or the truth or probability of a proposition.

The section on deductive logic is the core of the course. We begin with a discussion of the difference between a mere assertion of one's beliefs, and an argument or discourse containing inference. This leads to the importance of the duty of furnishing adequate evidence for our beliefs. Some of the so-called fallacies are treated in this connection, not as fallacies, which they are not, but rather as evasions of the responsibility for furnishing relevant evidence. I refer here to the appeals to authority, to emotion, to ignorance, to the ad hominem, etc. These are treated as evasions of the law that we should furnish rational justification for our beliefs.

The course then takes up the discussion of the syllogism, conceived in a broad manner as a fundamental form of mediate inference, including all forms of enthymematic reasoning, and the hypothetical and alternative forms. We begin with the categorical type, and clarify the categorical propositions in terms of the class analysis. The student is immediately introduced to the rules for the validity of categorical syllogisms, stated in the artificial or schematic forms of the traditional treatment, with the premises first and the conclusion last, without linguistic complications. The theorems or corollaries are then studied, and a brief historical mention of the moods and figures of the syllogism is then presented, without exploring all of the various permutations of the latter material. A student of logic ought to know something about these useless, though interesting phases of the subject. A more thorough discussion of the problem of diagramming concludes the first phase of the treatment of the syllogism. The diagrams are emphasized because they show the student that a "picture" of the relations will indicate that the premises may be accepted without his being logically coerced into accepting the conclusion of an invalid argument. The Euler circles are regarded as better adapted to this approach than the Venn diagrams, since they require some ingenuity on the part of the student in finding the picture which will indicate the invalidity of the argument. But the Euler circles are wholly inadequate to do the job for many arguments containing o-form propositions, or to illustrate the impossibility of drawing a valid negative conclusion from two affirmative premises. A new interpretation of the circle diagrams is used which gives a strict interpretation of all possible meanings of the four logical forms.

After the student has learned the rules of analysis, he is shown the relevance of semantical analysis to the analysis of arguments as they appear in living or everyday discourse. Considerable attention is now given to exclusive, exceptive and negative propositions; and the equivalences of obversion, conversion and contraposition are discussed in this connection. Then comes the analysis of syllogisms as they actually appear in living



discourse, where the chief problems are linguistic rather than formal, so far as analysis is concerned. The four-term fallacy is not discussed until the student has had this semantical background.

The exercises constitute one of the most important pedagogical tools in this connection. Since this elementary course emphasizes the application and use of principles, the exercises are indispensable for testing the student's achievement at each stage of the work. Through the exercises the principles become "second nature" to the student without the necessity of committing them to memory. But the exercises must be properly broken down into varying levels of difficulty, for each higher level of analysis. In this way the teacher can know where the student's difficulty first manifests itself. This requires many more types of exercises than are customarily used in the logic class. For example, one of the first exercises we use in deductive analysis distinguishes between affirmative and negative propositions and nothing else. When a sufficient number of exercises are provided, very few students need fail the logic course and very few should lack an understanding of its fundamental principles.

The tests should also be organized on the same principles, i.e., on different levels of analysis and difficulty. On a given unit of the work in deductive logic a test should contain questions on the bare minima which are indispensable for the understanding of the fundamental principles. To take a simple example, there might be ten questions in a test on the syllogism. Two of these questions might involve the analysis of syllogisms containing the undistributed middle term and illicit process. If the student can handle these syllogisms, presented to him in the artificial schematic forms, he might be given 60% credit for these two questions alone. The remainder of the questions should determine whether a student deserves a C, or B, or A. But the teacher should know whether the student fails to understand the basic rules of the syllogism or whether he is unable to handle the linguistic problems of rhetoric. Semantical problems involving linguistic transformations should be separated from the purely formal problems. It should also be practically impossible for a student to make 100% on a test for otherwise the teacher will not know how really good the good students can be.

No student, or practically no student, should leave a logic course without a clear understanding of the basic principles of deductive logic, and how they are applied. If a student fails to pass the simple questions involving 60 per cent of the value of the test, and fails on the other questions, he should be given a retest, which will average his two grades, with the understanding that the highest grade attainable on the combination will be D. The questions on the retest should be of exactly the same types as the originals, with new material in the same forms. Experience indicates that students who fail on the first test will strive mightily to pass the second test, and a large percentage of those who fail the first test will finally master the material.

By such easy stages, moving along more rapidly as the student acquires a clear understanding of what is expected of him, he will soon master the compound and complex propositions and syllogisms, and their equivalences.

In the third part of the course, on scientific methods, the material follows the traditional pattern in covering the meaning of truth and probability; the analysis of scientific thinking in terms of the use of hypotheses, deduction of the implications and testing; the meaning of cause and effect; induction, analogical reasoning, and statistics; and also includes a discussion of the relevance of logical methods and scientific proof to problems of evaluation or values. In this last part of the course the attempt has also been made to work out exercises which will test the student's understanding of the principles through the application of these principles to problems. For example, given a set of symbols which represent the antecedent factors in a causal situation, the student is expected to draw inferences concerning just what such a situation would prove or fail to prove.

One or two points in conclusion. Modern developments in logic are noted only where they are needful supplements to the traditional material or where they are necessary correctives of that material. Thus the problem of the existential import of propositions must be noted in connection with inferences in opposition and syllogistic analysis. New forms of diagramming, as before noted, are required to correct some of the inadequacies of the Euler.



circles. The possible relations between terms must also be generalized beyond the relation of inclusion and exclusion. The student should also become familiar with the basic symbols of symbolic logic. But it is thought undesirable to introduce the basic principles of the logical calculus into the first course, since unless this is done adequately, and in a usable manner, the student is apt to feel that such material is trivial and useless. The teacher in the elementary course should play the role of Moses, who led his people to the edge of the promised land but did not actually enter it. The logic teacher should similarly bring his students to a point where they will have a vision of the promised land and its paradisaal possibilities, without actually crossing over in the first course. It should not be forgotten, of course, that this is a one-semester course, followed by a course in symbolic logic, which begins where this one ends. The second course is for those who have a more specialized interest in logic as a formal science, rather than in the course which is conceived of as part of a general education.

In closing, I note that Mr. Brennan wished to deal with logic as a purely formal science, and Mr. Hahn wished to make logic a remedial and functional subject. I have no quarrel with these objectives. But where only one course is possible, both approaches should be combined. This indeed is what the traditional logic course aimed to do. Our present task is to bring that course up to date. If we do so, perhaps the irony expressed in the verse of Winthrop Mackworth Praed will be not entirely justified as a description of our students:

Of science and logic he chatters  
As fine and as fast as he can.  
Though I am no judge of such matters  
I'm sure he's a talented man.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP I  
ON THE TEACHING OF LOGIC AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Mortimer R. Kadish

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Discussion fluctuated between the questions of what was to be taught in elementary logic classes and by what devices, techniques and instances the undetermined "what" was to be taught. Most of the teachers present gave priority to the latter question; and a proposal was advanced for the initiation of a clearing house for illustrations of logical points. The question, however, of precisely what the students were to acquire through the ingenuity of their professors, provoked a certain unease and a more negative response. Everyone appeared aware that there was more to logic than the square of opposition, the syllogism, fallacies (used to include a great deal in no way connected with logic as a formal discipline) and so on. But few thought it wise to reveal the secret to the beginning student. The, roughly, traditional logic, modified in certain ways, was regarded seemingly as at once more practical and intelligible; and the argument that recent developments in logic analyze in both a more penetrating and more natural fashion the ways of colloquial discourse, moved only a minority.

In sum, uncertain of what we were teaching, except that it be "intelligible," or of its precise value, except that it be "practical," most of us present seemed to locate the problem of the logic teacher in the painstaking illustration of whatever we happened to be teaching.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP II  
ON THE TEACHING OF LOGIC AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Virgil G. Hinshaw, Jr.  
Ohio State University

It was suggested that the teacher has the moral responsibility both to show that logic is a formal science and to teach a functional logic.

It was asked why there must be a unity of subject matter in the teaching of logic. Why must semantics, symbolic logic, and scientific method all be unified? One doesn't find such unity in teaching a physics course, for example.

It was suggested that teachers of logic should ask teachers of science what they would like to see in the introductory logic course.

It was pointed out that the teacher can not synthesize the teaching of two kinds of logic, namely, the traditional Aristotelian and the modern symbolic logic. This is because the pupil has to master a symbolism of the propositional and functional calculi before he can appreciate the power and philosophical value of symbolic logic. But, since it takes at least a quarter course to begin to master the symbolism, one has time only for the teaching of symbolic logic. It was suggested, however, that a book like John Cooley's Primer of Formal Logic could be used to teach both symbolic logic and remedial logic.

It was thought by one contributor that the kinds of students in a logic class should determine what is taught. Remedial logic should be taught to the poor student, and symbolic logic to those with an average grade of C or better. It was mentioned that there are available diagnostic tests for screening students. Another contributor suggested that the clientele of the course should determine the emphasis upon functional logic, symbolic logic, or scientific method.

It was agreed by several that philosophy needs to be more aggressive. There is a challenge to teach logic, since there are so many professional fields which need a study of logic as preparation. Philosophy departments can no longer be isolationists. They need to cooperate with all sorts of professional schools.

It was pointed out that some English Departments take over the function of teaching logic in connection with composition courses. The result is usually a muddled and abbreviated course in logic. Something should be done about this situation. It was thought that a possible solution might be found in offering joint courses in composition and logic.

It was asked how many departments of philosophy use logic as the first course in philosophy in place of the regular introduction to philosophy. No department seems to do this, although some offer logic as one of the introductory courses.

It was pointed out that there was a problem of teaching logic to graduate students who usually approach graduate study with diverse backgrounds. At Yale University, the Department insists that the new graduate students know both traditional Aristotelian logic and symbolic logic. Moreover, a course in philosophical logic is offered there.

The question was raised whether logic should continue to be a liberal arts subject in a technical school. There was some agreement that it should.

A number of questions were asked concerning the implementation of the policy of "non-isolationism" of philosophy departments.

It was suggested that departments must dismiss their snobbery toward the practical as well as become aware of the problems peculiar to the professional students. Likewise, it was suggested that encouragement for "non-isolationism" must come from the professional schools themselves.



## TEACHING THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

George Boas

Johns Hopkins University

It is the feeling of your speaker that such terms as philosophy, ethics, the history of philosophy, ought to be defined *a posteriori*, for if one sets out with a ready made definition of what such subjects ought to be, one is both confronted with the actual fact that the definitions seldom fit the *definienda* and, what is worse, that there is no adjusting the teaching of them to the kinds of students one is trying to teach nor to the institution in which they are being taught. The history of philosophy, however one define it, is a relatively modern subject, for until the end of the eighteenth century books in the field were either revisions of Diogenes Laertius or simple abstracts of his work. Nineteenth century studies in the field were very likely to follow the lead of Hegel, a lead which moved towards periods, persistent problems, and eternal ideas revealing themselves in an order presumably decreed by God. If the history of philosophy is what the followers of Diogenes Laertius did and if it is what the Hegelian school did, then I am compelled to admit that there is no longer much use in asking our students in the undergraduate courses to study it. I do not mean by this that such studies are of no interest to anyone, but simply that they are not of great value to undergraduates in such a university as the Johns Hopkins.

The average undergraduate in this university is a candidate for higher studies, often in the sciences, sometimes in the humanities. Few of them go on with graduate work in philosophy, and it is the policy of the department as composed at present to discourage such as have that idea. Now the general history of ideas shows that one never knows where a physicist, biologist, art historian, to take but three examples, derives some of his leading ideas. But it also shows that very frequently the start of such a man's work is in the field which is traditionally known as philosophy. Copernicus when he sought for a formula which gave the simplest explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, Einstein when he raised the question of what was a satisfactory definition of simultaneity at a distance, Darwin when he was willing - not to say able - to conceive of species whose members were highly various in many of their characteristics, were all oriented by questions which had their beginnings in philosophy. But similarly Bergson, Whitehead, and certainly Dewey, to select almost contemporary cases, found equally stimulating ideas in fields which are not usually thought of as philosophical. There is a constant interplay of influence between philosophy and non-philosophy and the representatives or both disciplines would profit by knowing more about it. If then one is teaching the history of philosophy in an institution like my own to undergraduates, it is useful to dwell upon the history of the influence of philosophy on the sciences and other non-philosophical studies.

But such would clearly not be true if one were teaching in a graduate school, if one were teaching philosophy majors, if one were teaching in a technological institute. In those cases obviously different interests would demand satisfaction. Yet those of our colleagues who are of the conviction that there is something called philosophy which never changes its real nature, perennial philosophy, for instance, could surely not subscribe to this program and in fact it might even seem deplorable to them, as so many of its sponsor's ideas have in the past. How perennial philosophy could have a history is something which I fail to understand, but that is of no concern of ours at this point in the discussion.

Since one cannot within the limits of one's adult life discover the history of everything which has at one time or other been included within the province of philosophy and since, even if one could, one would not have time to teach it, it is necessary that some selection be made of the topics which will be taken up in such a course as we are describing. Here one has at a minimum the following choices: (a) to take the problems which seem - by an



adroit use of the imagination - to be implicit in Greek colonial philosophies and trace their subsequent history; (b) to take certain ideas which are prevalent today and trace their history as far back as one can; (c) plagiarise Windelband and discuss periods and those men whom Windelband's master thought had the good sense to anticipate in some sense of the word his own philosophy. If one were to make the first of these choices, one would undertake a general history of European thought, an obviously impossible task. We are all accustomed to telling our students how the first philosophers were scientists, cosmologists, biologists - here an adroit reference to Anaximander, geologists, and so on, and how, as philosophy moved over to Athens, humanistic studies arose. By the time one gets to Aristotle, philosophy turns into everything knowable and something more, if I may abuse a Latin tag. If one takes the last choice, one will omit a number of men - most of the Frenchmen, for instance - whom Hegel either knew nothing about or could not fit into his scheme, one will never show his students that a period is as much characterised by its inner tensions and conflicts as by its uniformity, and one will be unaware of what certain philosophical ideas meant to the time in which they were prevalent. The result of the last of these consequences will be that all sorts of anachronisms will pass unnoticed and the student will fail to see that Plato was talking to his contemporaries, not to twentieth century Americans, and that the One of Plotinus was the God of Saint Thomas. For after all what difference can a date make to an idea if the idea is eternal? And how recognize an idea except by its lasting characteristic, its name?

If one make the middle of these choices, one will frankly admit that one is teaching the history of a selected group of modern ideas. To all intents and purposes this is not the history of philosophy, though a history of how the conception of philosophy developed would be an interesting and profitable study, but the history of certain philosophical ideas. As soon as one is liberated from the notion that there is such a thing as persistent problems of philosophy or a perennial philosophy or just plain philosophy, one discovers a number of problems which never, or seldom, get into the books and yet which have had the greatest influence in changing men's minds. I refer to such a topic as man's appraisal of man. The cluster of ideas which are associated with this topic is very thick and has been called by Lovejoy primitivism and related ideas. It has a history running from Homer to contemporary times, involves a criticism of contemporary civilization, illustrates what men of various periods and cultures have thought of their civilization, what faults they believed to lie in it, what faults they did not see in it. Such a study is not only interesting in itself, but is also of great value to students of literary, political, and social history. Another of the leading ideas of our times and those of the past is that of Nature and the Natural as a norm. Others are the Great Chain of Being, the theory of scientific procedure, the conflict between science and value-theory, none of which figures largely in the usual histories of philosophy. In fact, the number of contemporary problems which do not appear in the text-books on the history of philosophy is so large that one can scarcely choose reasonably.

But there are also certain philosophical problems which can only be treated historically in the opinion of your speaker. One of these is the kind of reasoning which appears in philosophy, by which I mean here metaphysics, epistemology, and the value-sciences. I know of no a priori method of determining how philosophic thought proceeds. One has to watch it in the philosophic texts themselves, observe what a man takes for granted, what basic metaphors control his system building - when he is building a system, what he considers good evidence, what criteria he uses for satisfactory conclusions. Again, the whole question of the so-called social control of philosophy, such as Russell says he is discussing in his history, or the Marxists used to discuss, cannot be answered except by a scrutiny of what the philosophers of the past have asserted and a comparison of it with the social conditions. Be it noted that I am in ignorance of what social conditions are when they are supposed to exclude universities and other schools, but my ignorance has nothing to do with the problem.

A final comment on the teaching of the history of philosophy as distinguished from the subject-matter is in order. In a university such as the Johns Hopkins, it may be assumed that the undergraduates read and are willing to read. I therefore see little sense in a professor's repeating in any form what already has been said in a book, unless that book is in a language which his students cannot read or is so rare that it is inaccessible. But to hand out to one's students Fuller's history and then proceed to repeat what Fuller has said reduces the teacher to the position of a phonograph record. Would it not be preferable to confine



one's lectures to those things which one has discovered for oneself and, when one has nothing to add to the text-book, to ask the students to read the book in place of listening to the lecture? Even if one follows the traditional books, there are still topics which are inadequately treated in them and the teacher has plenty to do if he confines his discussions to those topics. For a tradition has grown up that certain philosophers are important and others unimportant and what the measure of their importance has been is fairly, if not entirely, obscure. I cannot but believe that the neglect of English Platonism, particularly as it anticipates Kant, is unfortunate; that the neglect of the anti-Cartesians in France gives a student a very false picture of what the development of thought in that country was, that the almost complete omission of nineteenth century French thought, with the exception of Comte, of Renaissance Italian thought, of the rise of Neo-Scholasticism and these are but the most glaring omissions, simply distorts the progress of philosophy. If the teacher maintain in his defence that he has not the time to cover so much ground, the reply is that the things he finds to discuss are already sufficiently discussed in the text-books and that he thus has plenty of time to lecture on those things which do not appear in them.

It is to be admitted that as university curricula have developed in this country, courses have become standardized, largely, one supposes, through the activities of the publishing houses, encouraged by the necessity of professors' supplementing their incomes. One might imagine that a philosopher occupied a chair in order to philosophize and not simply to report on the philosophies of other people. But as in other fields, such as the literatures, certain courses have crystallized and become set bodies of information: the Introduction to Philosophy, Problems of Philosophy, Ethics, and so on, and each is neatly packaged in a text-book to be peddled to the student who quite naturally is convinced that this is the essence of the whole matter. But most such text-books are warmed over dishes whose original cooks have long since disappeared from the earthly scene. The situations which gave rise to the problems discussed never appear and the student gets the odd notion that philosophy is a subject which appears *in vacuo*. The teacher, who it goes without saying is overloaded with a too heavy schedule, seldom has the opportunity of discussing philosophy as Socrates or Aristotle or Plotinus probably discussed it. His own ideas figure very little in the course except when he ventures to find fault with what the text-book teaches. And when he is using his own text, a not unusual occurrence, well, the less said the better.

I should have liked to discuss the 23 questions which Professor Harris so kindly sent us one by one, for they are all provocative and worthy of detailed comment. But there is one which particularly interests me: "How can one provide for the emergence of permanent conceptions?" For it is hard to see how a conception which is really permanent should have emerged after the time of Thales; it is difficult to see why a permanent conception is of any greater interest than one which is impermanent; it is finally very difficult to understand why one has to make any provision for anything, emergent or submergent, other than taking it up when it occurs.

Before closing may I apologize for speaking in so authoritarian a tone, but it is the privilege of senility to lay down the law. I do not pretend to know how to teach the history of philosophy for the simple reason that I do not believe there is any such thing as philosophy dissociated from the problems of philosophy. And if philosophers learn that much from teaching this subject, they will have justified the time they spend on it.



## THE PHILOSOPHIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Warner A. Wick

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If we are philosophers, we should ask philosophic questions of ourselves as teachers; and regarding the history of philosophy, we ought to concern ourselves first with what we think its philosophic uses are. Having decided that, we may know better how it should be taught, to whom, and how much.

It is not only a wish to be consistent with our precepts which leads to these reflections, though it is we who think it important to know who said "the unexamined life is not worth living". It is more that the history of philosophy is losing ground in general education, recommended as it still may be for specialists. But even for professionals the nature of its value is questionable, for the philosophies which I should call most characteristic of this generation agree that the history of philosophy is of little importance as philosophy, however interesting it may be as history.

For example, one of the commonest approaches to philosophic ideas is ruled by the assumption that they are to be both understood and judged in relation to the peculiarities of their times. If ideas are instruments of adjustment and adaptation, philosophies too must be examined in the light of the situations to which their creators needed adaptation and of the tensions they were invoked to adjust. It follows that the doctrines of the past had a significance for their times which they cannot have for us, and their continuing value lies chiefly in their power to illustrate, in rise and decline, the principle that their significance is a function of time and circumstance.

Thus, at the beginning of his Reconstruction in Philosophy, Dewey remarked "with malice prepense" that philosophies are more effectively disposed of by exposing the conditions of their birth than by trying to refute their arguments. As an aristocrat, Plato naturally despised any empiricism associated with the menial arts; and the hierarchy of being which is customarily found in Aristotle's world is a projection of his attachment to the obsolescent stratifications of the polis.

Of course this general principle of criticism is hardly the exclusive possession of Dewey or of pragmatists. It was expounded by Thrasymachus in the Republic. It is the mainstay of the sociology of knowledge as of Marxist criticism, and the "class-angling" of our friends' opinions is one of the more diverting uses of the argument ad hominem. What is important here is the privileged status given to the principle that the meaning and validity of philosophies is relative to their biological-cultural matrices. Used for assaying all ideas, this principle is not regarded as being relative to circumstances in the same fashion as other ideas and principles. This view of the history of philosophy therefore expresses a commitment to certain principles as ultimate. And that is to say that it is the expression of one philosophy among others. In the hands of a man like Dewey the philosophy is impressive; but when it is employed in the criticism of other philosophies it is not unprejudiced, for it judges them by criteria not their own. To adopt it as a principle of teaching is to justify our failures to understand other philosophies and to narrow the horizons of our students.

Another familiar estimate of the history of philosophy, which may or may not be combined with the former, is one associated with the "analytic" philosophy of Cambridge and the positivism of Vienna. Both wish to make philosophy scientific, and they treat it as analogous to a natural science in interesting ways. Proficiency in current logical analysis does not depend upon a knowledge of Aristotle's logic any more than success in physics requires acquaintance with that of Archimedes. The history of science and philosophy may be a



liberalizing influence in education, like all history, making us aware of our debts. But that is a matter of neither science nor philosophy but of history. On such terms the educational use of the history of philosophy is in recounting, and accounting for, the genesis of modern discoveries; and it may incidentally illustrate the need for constant vigilance against obscurantism and self-delusion.

What happens to the history of philosophy in such a scheme can be seen in a pattern which is increasingly noticeable in some American and British universities, where to be a philosopher is to be an analyst in the technical sense, where lectures concern specialized problems which interest the lecturers, and sound like articles in *Mind*. The history of philosophy, if pursued for more than its possible moral, is a question of "scholarship" rather than of philosophy.

Here too a particular approach to philosophy, with its characteristic principles of meaning and method, is accepted as canonical. It determines standards by which all ideas, and therefore other philosophies, are to be judged, and again by principles not their own. This position is also defensible and impressive. But it has defensible alternatives which receive a hearing only in a mock trial, just as it never has to defend itself except against straw men created for its own exercise. This, of course, is not evidence of dirty dealing; it is what inevitably happens when one philosophy is interpreted in terms of another.

I have sketched two attitudes toward the history of philosophy. They are more widely accepted than the pragmatism and positivism which I have cited among their possible grounds. I suspect that a bias toward one or both may be found in most of us. For both, the history of philosophy is not essential to philosophy itself though it may have a derivative importance as a source of illustrations or object-lessons. It may, accordingly, be thought wise to teach the history of philosophy on a modest scale even to elementary students. Otherwise they might not be on their guard against reactionary attempts to justify some absolutism or other. Or, as Philipp Frank puts it in his recent book, students almost invariably pick up "chance philosophies," usually "some obsolete but popular philosophy which will replace the thorough logical analysis of science."<sup>1</sup>

Unless these views are explicitly examined, the young might not realize that they are obsolete.

## II

I now want to develop a point of view which does not require the rejection of any major philosophic position, not even of those which I have outlined above, but which does require a different treatment of the history of philosophy.

What is characteristic of philosophy in all its branches and forms is a concern with principles - principles of inquiry and knowledge, of action and policy, of valuation, of reality - by which thinking can be regulated and tested. Whether they are called assumptions, postulates, rules of procedure or laws of historical development is at present unimportant. It is equally irrelevant to ask whether they may be sought in the characteristics of things, in the deliverances of immediate experience, the forms of thought, or the structure of language. What we must notice is their function in justifying basic distinctions between questions in philosophy and the sciences, arts, and professions, in determining the kinds of problems and criteria for recognizing their solutions, or in rejecting some lines of inquiry as pseudo-problems. So employed, philosophic principles do not derive their cogency from the circumstances of history, for even the view that every historical philosophy is significant only for its time is, if true, true for all times. It follows that the essential questions about any philosophy are independent of its history.

But if philosophizing is the identification, testing, defense, and application of principles, its materials are to be found in an examination of alternative principles and of the various ways in which they can be advocated and used. But these materials are to be found nowhere but among historical philosophies and the dialectical process of testing them which began in the West with the conversations of the Greeks. I then propose a paradox: The history of

<sup>1</sup> Philipp Frank, *Modern Science and its Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, p. 265.



a philosophy is not philosophically important, but no philosophic issue is understood without an appreciation of the varied ways in which it has been conceived.

My proposition does not require that philosophic problems be introduced by chronological surveys of their histories. On the contrary, the time-order might be reversed or scrambled. But since every age including our own has characteristic predilections, pre-occupation with the up-to-date is always confining. In order to be aware of the grounds and consequences of our own commitments, we need to see what happens to our problems and solutions when they are handled by other methods and principles. If we are among those who find our crucial distinctions in a logical analysis of the functions of language, it would be well to understand how Hume carried out the plan, outlined in the introduction to the Treatise, of basing corresponding distinctions upon a psychological study of human nature. That his differentiation of questions about relations of ideas from those about matters of fact is like more recent classifications of analytic and synthetic propositions should not make us overlook equally instructive differences in the grounds for such parallels. Moreover, it seems to me, much recent discussion of ethical theory is regrettably thin because it is assumed that if ethics has any rational status it must meet the requirements for a theoretic science, either recording empirical regularities like sociology or deducing the consequences of postulates like mathematics. The work being done along these lines may be above criticism as long as its frame of reference is granted. But ethical problems take on a very different complexion if we approach them by way of Aristotle's distinction between theoretic and practical sciences - the latter concerned with the unique and variable rather than with what happens necessarily or for the most part, and terminating in actions and decisions rather than in knowledge - or by way of Kant's more complex classification in which both theoretic and practical sciences may be either pure or applied.

This dialectical use of the history of philosophy is sometimes approximated in intent by the familiar contrast of rationalisms and empiricisms, but appeals to experience and reason take many forms, and they turn out to be incommensurable. In the present century alone Husserl and Bergson as well as Dewey and Russell can claim to have founded their philosophies upon experience. We need to dig deeper for principles which explain why anything so common as experience should appear to be so different.

In any case, my thesis is simply stated: Philosophy is about principles, whose validity is unaffected by time, so that their antecedents are not philosophically important. But historical philosophies are the indispensable materials for philosophizing, and of any teaching of philosophy which is not indoctrination. The question whether they should be taken up in a dialectical or in a chronological order is a minor one.

### III.

What decision do these propositions suggest for teaching the history of philosophy? One is that a dialectical analysis of alternative doctrines being essential to a grasp of philosophical problems, it will be as necessary for non-majors as for majors, for it is philosophy itself. This may seem at first to subordinate all interests to those of the specialist, but that is far from true. All of us have known students (and colleagues) in the natural sciences who, having discovered that all we ever do is to transfer matter or transform energy and that "scientific method" is triumphant in physics, is sure that physics is the basic science, all others treating specifications of its subject matter and employing approximations of its method. Or we have met the social scientist who sees laws of social development as ultimate principles because all human knowledge and activity are social phenomena; or the student who regards the humanities as basic because all culture is a product of human art - man's attempt to construct images by which experience can be interpreted and controlled. Each of these are effects of philosophic principles at work among non-specialists. Each view has a continuing history beginning at least with Democritus, Protagoras, and Isocrates. But most important for us, the history of philosophy is rich in discussions of the means by which such syntheses are effected, of their implications, and of difficulties inherent in their acceptance. The least we can do for the ordinary student is to make him aware of the consequences and alternatives of his own philosophy. Perhaps the most we can do for him in general education is to make him understand the issues about which the experts and pseudo-experts argue by recognizing the principles at work in the competition of ideas. There is nothing in such a program which need be esoteric or the concern of a limited group.



It is obvious by this time that a use of the history of philosophy such as I have been advocating will have a limited need for the customary narrative textbook or narrative course. At the lowest level such books and courses provide a survey of opinions; but there is no philosophy in them unless opinions can be seen to function as principles or unless they are given meaning by other principles. It is for this reason that discussions of teaching methods on the order of audio-visual aids to memory are so irrelevant in philosophy. It is no problem to make students associate the name of Thales with water, and Pavlov could have done it with his dogs if he had shouted "Thales" at them instead of ringing his bell; but he would not thereby have made a dog into a philosopher.

At a higher level and more typically, philosophy does appear in such surveys but only as the philosophy of the author or teacher. It is seldom really examined. The result is a particular version of the making of the modern mind, with opinions collected, caricatured and ordered according to the demands of some particular doctrine and often in the hands of a second-rate thinker. If a survey of opinions as such is meaningless, one conducted in the interests of one philosophy is misleading.

If philosophizing is the student's business, he must become acquainted with the process first hand, in first class examples. To do this need not be to take complete systems at a bite, for philosophers have been obliging in bringing their principles to bear upon specific problems and it is more important to compare different approaches and solutions to the same problem than to achieve a well-rounded view of each system whose author is consulted.

Of course students need help if they are to discover what is going on in a philosophical text. And they need to be helped, not carried; for no one ever understood a difficult problem without thinking about it, and solutions presented ready-made are not recognized as solutions to real problems even though they may be remembered and reproduced in examinations. Directed analysis and discussion of original authors is, I think, the chief device of anyone who wants to teach something about historical philosophies. The principal question is always "what is the author doing, and why?", and it needs to be considered in his terms, not in those of someone who knows what he should have done. So long as this main point is not forgotten, lectures and readings in historical backgrounds are useful. They are only incidental to philosophizing but they may help by sketching in the occasions which have prompted it.

It has been the burden of my argument that the chronology of philosophy is not its essence, and that the history of philosophy, as history, is without significance unless one understands the issues which have been fought over. It is nevertheless true that historical formulations of philosophic problems have influenced each other, as Kant testified to the stimulation of Hume. Aside from the fact that I think courses in the history of philosophy fall too easily into tracing the development of technical gimmicks whose employment may characterize an epoch, such studies are interesting. I simply think they are not essential, particularly for undergraduates. In the first place, it does no good to remember the peculiarities of transcendental logic unless one understands the problems it was supposed to solve. As Jean Wahl reports a Mount Holyoke student's complaint, "I understand the answer but I don't understand the question." In the second place, emphasis on the fact that most thinkers of an era tend to speak in certain commonplaces leaves out what may be of greater philosophic importance - that the commonplaces are used so as to mean very different things and that it is the basic assumptions of the contenders, their principles, which account for the differences in meaning. For example, Otis Lee's recent book points out that nearly everyone in the seventeenth century sought simple intuitive elements by the analytic method in order that they might be recombined in deductions and demonstrations according to the synthetic method. But this common use of a device permits the greatest latitude for differences not only about where or what the simple elements may be, but about what may be built with them. Similar varieties in philosophy occur when men ask similarly phrased questions about the unity and plurality of substantial forms or about the logical analysis of science.

So, if Locke was influenced by Descartes in such a way that he too looked for clear and distinct ideas which could be the objects of intuition and deduction, he also grievously misunderstood him - as Aristotle misunderstood Plato. The philosophies in both cases are essentially different. Their meaning and validity are quite independent of their common



topics and of the question of whether the contenders understood each other. I say then that tracing historical influences is interesting; and graduate students learning their trade should be thoroughly at home with the various technical devices in philosophical literature. But these matters are still of secondary importance and may well be distracting to undergraduates who need to know their commitments rather than to learn the tricks of a trade.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP I  
ON THE TEACHING OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Loyd D. Easton

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At the outset the chairman gave a brief resume and classification, with examples, of the questions on History of Philosophy submitted prior to the Conference. Mr. Foss commented on confusion in students' minds resulting from a relativistic approach to history of philosophy; the remedy, he asserted, is to interpret and evaluate diverse systems in terms of truth, emphasize eternal problems, and thus give students something more than a series of historical contradictions. Mr. Kraft sought a synthesis between relativism which loses philosophy and absolutism which slips into dogma; above all, he urged, we must believe in philosophy itself which is something different from history of philosophy.

To a question from Mr. Connover on what the professor can do that is not done in books, Mr. Boas replied that what the professor can do is first determined by who is listening to him; thus the course-content will vary with types of students and their philosophical problems rather than following a textbook pattern. The conditions of teaching being what they usually are, the real teachers of philosophy, Mr. Boas observed, are the textbook publishers. And the traditional history of philosophy is often artificial and misleading as it uses words from the past that have entirely different meanings today - "God," "democracy."

Mr. Rosenstock-Huessy described the history course at Dartmouth which seeks to create interest by presenting philosophical problems as they were introduced into our civilization; beginning with nominalism vs. realism in the early university of Paris, Renaissance science, and the emergence of modern social sciences, the course then traces both antecedents and continuities. After forty-five minutes of going "where it listeth," the discussion returned to the problem of relativism as Mr. Kraft stressed the need to distinguish between a relativism interested in truth and one imposed on all philosophy as a pre-conception.



SEMINAR DISCUSSION REPORT FOR GROUP II  
ON THE TEACHING OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Louis O. Kattsoff

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The discussions centered for the most part around the subject of method and aims of courses in the history of philosophy. After considerable discussion the following points of view were brought out: A distinction was made between the teaching of the history of philosophy, the history of philosophies, and the history of philosophers. In general the group seemed to feel that a mere chronological account of the history of philosophy was a rather valueless thing. There was also a tendency to place in a secondary position any discussion of the lives of philosophers. Some approval was given to the idea of the development of philosophic systems although it was felt by many that too rigid a developmental point of view might be taken to imply a kind of Hegelian development to an absolute final philosophy or the assumption of Thomistic finality. The two most important ideas that were developed were (1) that courses in the history of philosophy should rather emphasize the mutual inter-relationships between the development of philosophical ideas and the development of civilization. It was felt that a good course in the history of philosophy would make students aware of the vital role which ideas play in the development of the various aspects of our civilization and the impact of cultural data on the development of ideas. (2) A very interesting idea that the history of philosophy should be treated as a kind of series of "case studies." The feeling was that this might reduce the history of philosophy almost to a kind of introduction to philosophy but that this need not be an objection to treating the history in this way.

There was practically no discussion of teaching techniques. The general consensus seemed to be that the lecture-discussion method was the best kind of approach to the teaching of the history of philosophy. No suggestion was even made that teachers should lecture completely in such courses.



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